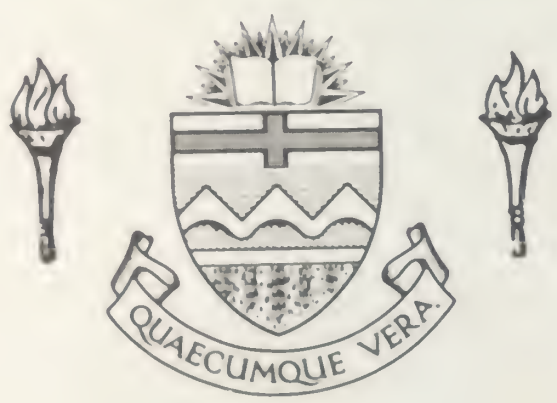

A HISTORY OF EARLY EDMONTON

BY

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FOREWORD

In the recital of the events set down in the following pages no attempt has been made to give an exhaustive account of the history of Edmonton, but rather a general impression of some of the phases of the life of Fort Edmonton as a fur-trading post and,later, of the beginnings of Edmonton as a settlement struggling into being.

CHAPTER I

The Earliest Days

It was in the period of historic rivalry between those powerful fur trading organizations, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North-West Company, that Fort Edmonton had its beginnings. With the overthrow of French rule in Canada the fur-traders, who had followed in the path of La Vérendrye to the country of the Saskatchewan, were soon replaced by Montreal traders,mostly Scottish. These,realizing the magnitude of the task before them and the advantages of cooperation, amalgamated their interests and formed the North-West Company in 1784. The daring,energetic representatives of this company pushed farther and farther afield, combining exploration with the organization of the fur trade. They penetrated the Indian country,established posts at strategic points throughout this vast inland territory and thus intercepted the steady flow of trade which had hitherto gone to the posts of the Great Company on the shores of Hudson Bay. If they were to cope with these competitors,the Hudson's Bay Company saw they must adopt the same methods:

they too must construct posts in the interior. The line of progress westward of their aggressive rival was closely followed by the Gentlemen Adventurers. More and more they were compelled to establish post for post. These were usually built side by side with the twofold purpose of keeping an eye on each other and for mutual protection against the warlike and none too friendly Indians. Thus it was in these very early days of keen competition between the companies that Fort Edmonton, the parent of modern Edmonton, had its origin. But modern Edmonton is not the original site of the Hudson's Bay Company's post, Edmonton House. That was about twenty miles down stream near a point later chosen for the Fort Saskatchewan of today. The North-West Company had also erected a post there, Fort Augustus, later designated Old Fort Augustus to distinguish it from New Fort Augustus afterwards built on the flats on the banks of the Saskatchewan just below the city power plant of modern Edmonton.

One of the first men connected with the life of these early posts of the rival companies on the North Saskatchewan was John Macdonald of Garth and in his autobiographical reminiscences are to be found references to their founding. Macdonald came to Canada as a young lad in 1791, joined the North-West Company and later became a partner. He was first assigned to serve in the West under Mr. Angus Shaw and was with him when he established Fort George on the Saskatchewan in the fall of 1792. Macdonald gives 1798 as the date of the founding of the North-West Company's post, Fort Augustus, and assigns the following reason for its establishment: "It having been found that the Indian hunting grounds were getting too distant and also that one establishment was not enough for the many tribes who met there and sometimes quarrelled, Mr. Hughes was ordered about two hundred miles farther up the river to commence another fort or settlement which we named Fort Augustus and to make as much progress as possible so that Mr. Shaw might find a house and store for his goods on his return."(1)

(1) Masson, L.R., Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, Quebec, 1890, v 2, p 22.

Macdonald of Garth was a very old man when he was induced to set down on paper reminiscences of the early fur-trading days and his editor frankly acknowledges that in some cases his memory as to dates was somewhat faulty. Duncan M'Gillivray,however, who was with the North-West Company at that period, gives a different date for the establishment of this post. M'Gillivray kept a journal, while he was stationed at Fort George in 1794-95, which contains an entry dated, Fort George, May 11th,1795,-"Mr. Shaw has projected a plan of erecting a house farther up the river in the course of the summer. For this purpose Mr. Hughes has received directions to build twelve or fourteen days' march from this by water on a spot called the Forks, being the termination of an extensive plain contained between two branches of this river. The country around Fort George is now entirely ruined. The natives have already killed all the beavers to such an extent that they lose much time in coming to the House during the hunting season." (1)

The English of the Hudson's Bay Company followed the Nor'Westers and Tomison built the rival post of Edmonton House in 1795. (2) It is said to have derived its name

(1) Morton, A.S.,ed.- The Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray of the North-West Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794-95, Toronto, 1929, p 77.

(2) Masson, L.R., ed., Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, Quebec, 1890, v II, p 59.

from the birthplace of Tomison's clerk,John Peter Prudens,who was born in Edmonton,Middlesex,England. That its location was in close proximity to the North-West Company's post,Old Fort Augustus, is learned from a later entry of Macdonald's. He speaks of passing the summer at his post, Fort George, and of joining in the buffalo hunt and when Mr. Shaw returned with the brigade....."I was ordered to join Mr. Hughes at Fort Augustus with a complement of men and goods for the trade.....we had here (besides the Hudson's Bay Company whose fort was within a musket shot of ours) the opposition on the other side of us, the new concern,I have already mentioned,which has assumed a powerful shape under the name of the X.Y. Company, at the head of which was the late John Ogilvy of Montreal and at this establishment a Mr. King,an old Scotch trader in his prime and pride as the first among bullies." (1)

The "new concern" mentioned by McDonald of Garth as also having an establishment on the site of Old Fort Augustus,was an off-shoot of the North-West Company. Difficulties and dissension had in the closing years of the eighteenth century crept into the ranks of the Nor'Westers. Opposing factions took sides with Alexander Mackenzie or Simon McTavish and the dissatisfied partners with Mackenzie as the moving spirit withdrew and organized

(1) Masson,L.R.,ed.,Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest,Quebec,1890, v II, p 22ff.

themselves into a company of their own known as the X.Y. Company. This new partnership included some of the most energetic and enterprising men in the fur trade, Messrs.Forsythe, Richardson and associates. There was then bitter competition between the two groups of former colleagues and a vigorous programme of pushing into the interior of the great West,particularly along the northern waterways, and of the establishment of post for post.

The designation "X. Y.Company" ,the somewhat odd name by which this new organization was known, seems to have originated as follows: It was customary at the North-West Company's posts to mark the bales made up for transport with the Company's initials, "N.W.", their trade-mark so to speak. On its establishment,the "New Concern" , accustomed to the ways of the parent company, followed a similar custom in marking their goods. They merely used the next two letters of the alphabet in stamping their bales. These symbols are therefore not contractions of a name.(1)

The death of old Simon McTavish,the stubborn and autocratic head of the Nor'Westers, put an end to the antagonism between the two groups of former associates and led to the amalgamation of forces in 1804. This in turn made for a stronger and more aggresive campaign against the Hudson's Bay Company.

(1) Bryce,G., The Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company,Toronto, 1904, p 148.

The location of the Fort Augustus built by Mr. Hughes, or Old Fort Augustus as it was afterwards designated, to distinguish it from New Fort Augustus, is established from the manuscript journals of Alexander Henry, fur trader of the North-West Company, and of David Thompson, official geographer and explorer of the same company. According to Dr. Coues, who edited these journals, "Old Fort Augustus stood on the left or northwest bank of the Saskatchewan close above the mouth of the Sturgeon River - between that and the present Frog Creek, which falls in on the other side and probably about opposite the latter; ..... the situation is thus a little below the present Fort Saskatchewan and on the other side of the river fully twenty miles in an air-line northeast from present Edmonton."(1) The two rivals maintained their respective posts at this point until they were destroyed by the Indians in the summer of 1807. David Thompson noted in his journal, September ~~2~~25nd, 1807, the meeting of a party of Indians who told him of the pillaging and destruction of these forts one or two months previously by a band of Blackfoot and Blood Indians. He made a further entry, dated June 22nd, 1810,

(1) Coues, Elliott, ed. New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest- The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson, 1799-1814, New York, 1897, v II, p 566, note 11.

Note: To mark this historic spot, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, on August 8th, 1927, erected a cairn near the site of the original Fort Augustus and Fort Edmonton.

of having arrived at the ruins of Fort Augustus, while journeying from the Columbia River eastward and adds-"This is the third year since this fort has been deserted."(1)

In 1808,both companies reestablished themselves farther up stream on flats at the foot of the high bank near the centre of the present site of the city of Edmonton. An early glimpse of the new posts is given by Alexander Henry, the younger, a partner in the North-West Company, who had been transferred from the Red River district to that of the Saskatchewan in 1808, with headquarters at Fort Vermilion, and who roamed and traded up and down the Saskatchewan River from 1808 to 1811. In his journal, which he kept with great care,he mentions a trip to "New" Fort Augustus in October,1809, from his wintering post at Fort Vermilion. On October 24th,1809, he records- "I invited the Hudson's Bay agents to breakfast and settled with them concerning our trade with the natives for the winter. I determined on a jaunt up to Fort Augustus; took

(1) Tyrrell,J.B., ed.,David Thompson's Narrative of his Explorations in Western America, 1784-1812,Toronto, 1916- Publications of the Champlain Society, v XII, p 432.

inventories and packed up the property,that nothing might be given out in my absence."(1) Of the latter part of his journey he writes that after crossing the river on October 30th "we ascended the hill, left the track to our left and directed our course to the Little Mountain,passing north of Old Fort Augustus.....Soon afterwards we fell upon the well-beaten track leading from Old Fort Augustus upwards; here the country is pleasant and open,with level plains and a fewhummocks.....We went on till we came to the entrance of the strong woods, where the track brought us upon the bank,in sight of the river, at a flat bottom, on which were the two establishments: the hill was steep and slippery. At 4 p.m. we entered Fort Augustus after a toilsome but expeditious journey from Fort Vermilion."(2) The steep and slippery hill was evidently somewhere along the bank near McDougall Hill and the two forts would be on the flats to the east of the present city power plant.

While at New Fort Augustus, Henry speaks of a band of one hundred Blood Indians coming to trade and hints at the perilous

(1) Coues,Elliott,ed.,New Light on the Early History of the Greater North-West,Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson, 1799-1814,New York,1897, v II,p 559.

(2) Ibid, v II, p 566ff

existence of these far away posts due to the turbulent and hostile Indian tribes. The very day after his arrival "the Bloods crossed the river and began to trade, forty principal men at our fort and sixty at the Hudson's Bay Company. A band of Sarcees also crossed. Both parties finished trading and recrossed to the south side. They were much inclined to mischief but observing everything ready to give them a proper reception they retired peaceably."(1)

These new posts at this location, however, had but a brief existence. Experiencing trouble repeatedly with the Indians the Nor'Westers, Hughes and Henry, in charge respectively of the posts ,Fort Augustus and Fort Vermilion, decided,in February,1810, that it would be better policy to combine forces, that one strong post would make for greater security against the warlike Blackfoot and Bloods and also for greater economy and efficiency in trade. A more central site was chosen at the mouth of the White Earth River which flows south into the Saskatchewan where it reaches the most northerly bend of its course. (2) Henry's journal February 7th, 1810, records the arrival of Mr. Hughes from Fort Augustus with the packet from Athabaska and Slave Lake. He had evidently come to Fort Vermilion to talk over the question of moving-

(I) Coues,E.,ed., New Light on the Early History of the Greater North-West,Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson,1799-1814, New York, 1897, v II, p 569.

(2) Ibid, v II, p 584.

"Mr. Hughes and myself decided to abandon both Fort Vermilion and Fort Augustus and to build at Terre Blanche (mouth of the White Earth River). (1) The latter being a more central place will answer the same purpose as the two present establishments and save the expense of one of them: it will also draw all the Slaves to trade at one place, where we can better defend ourselves from their insults. We can occasionally make outposts above for the Swampy Ground Assiniboines and some of the Crees..... By this means we hope to divide the Slaves from the Crees: if it succeeds it may save us a great deal of trouble and anxiety." (2)

With regard to the moving of the posts, it was of course advisable to persuade the rival Hudson's Bay Company to take the same action. This was before the period of very bitter opposition, unprincipled actions and bloody conflict which characterized the methods of both companies toward each other during the years from 1811 to 1821. The suggestion was apparently sympathetically received for of this Henry wrote under date of February 14th,1810,- "I set off early with my neighbor and Mr. Hughes

(1) The words in brackets are apparently the editor's interpretation of the geography of the site referred to.

(2) Coues, E.,ed., New Light on the Early History of the Greater North-West,Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson, 1799-1814,New York,1897, v II, p 584ff.

and his party to go up to Terre Blanche to examine the ground." (1) Thus apparently Mr. Hallett, the Hudson's Bay officer at Fort Vermilion, for the joint reasons of mutual assistance in case of attack and the better to keep check on a rival in trade decided it was expedient to move his post also to White Earth. Henry's journal entries from then on record preparations being made for the abandonment of Fort Vermilion and the progress of the erection of the establishment at Terre Blanche. On April 25th, 1810, Henry set out for Terre Blanche where he met Mr. Hughes, who had arrived on the 28th from Fort Augustus. "We settled on plans for the fort and made other arrangements for the season."(2) On May 31st, 1810, both companies' posts at Fort Vermilion were abandoned.(3)

The new forts of the two companies at Terre Blanche were built side by side, and both were enclosed by a continuous palisade. Their respective establishments were separated, however, by another palisade through which there was a communicating door to be used in case of attack.

(1) Coues, E., Ed., New Light on the Early History of the Greater North-West, Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson, 1799-1814, New York, 1897, v II, p 585.

(2) Ibid., v II, p 596.

(3) Ibid. v II, p 601.

"The bastion being finished", wrote Henry, "we put our property under lock and key. Men began to make the separation between us and the Hudson's Bay Company by erecting a range of stockades."(1) From further entries it is evident that by the late spring of 1811 Fort Augustus and Fort Edmonton had been abandoned for Terre Blanche. On May 15th,1811, Henry records a trip from Rocky Mountain House down the Saskatchewan....."At six we arrived at Fort Augustus where I crossed the Saskatchewan that same journey. We pitched our tent inside the old house." Proceeding on his journey,he comments, "On May 16th,1811, at 9 p.m.,we were at Sturgeon River below Old Fort Augustus."(2)

Other forces were at work,however, which led to the abandonment in due course of the posts of the two companies at the White Earth location. David Thompson,partner,trader and explorer of the North-West Company, who had been placed in charge of Rocky Mountain House in 1806, had established a flourishing trade in guns and ammunition at that post with the

(1) Coues,E.,ed., New Light on the Early History of the Greater North-West, Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson, 1799-1814, New York, 1897, v II, p 604.

(2) Ibid. v II, p 744.

Piegan Indians. His enterprise led him to push trade in similar commodities across the Rockies with the Kootenays, enemies of the Piegans. The mutual possession of firearms increased the hostility between the two tribes. The resentment of the Piegans towards Thompson, who traded impartially with the Indians, for supplying their enemies with firearms led them to refuse him permission to proceed through their country with his goods to the Columbia country beyond. The embargo of 1810 was decisive and Thompson with the interests of his company at heart sought another route by which to transport his goods across the mountains. From one of his Iroquois guides he learned that the Kootenay country could be reached by means of a northerly pass,used occasionally by Indians but hitherto unknown to the white man. From the directions given him Thompson made his way along the headwaters of the Athabaska River, crossed the Rockies through this pass, which afterwards became known as the Athabaska Pass, and reached the Big Bend of the Columbia, the descent of which river brought him to his desired goal. Thompson's successful exploration of this route in 1811 gave him a way across the mountains remote and secure from hostile Indians on the plains. This new discovery had far-reaching results. The North-West Company promptly established a transcontinental route of trade with its western terminus at Fort Vancouver on the Pacific Coast. The establishment of this new route free from Indian molestation

made the abandoned posts of Fort Augustus and Fort Edmonton the most convenient river base on the new transcontinental highway. They were accordingly reoccupied in 1819 and the White Earth posts were given up. After the refounding, the Edmonton site became one of the most important in the West : it was the breaking point in the continental route. The goods which were brought by water from Montreal were at this point transferred to pack horses for conveyance across the mountains to Boat Encampment at Big Bend on the Columbia River. From there, canoes took them down that river to Fort Vancouver, then situated in what is now the State of Washington, not far from the present city of Portland. The return route was by canoe up the Columbia to Boat Encampment, thence by pack horse to Henry House on the Athabaska River, a short distance from the present town of Jasper. Advantage was then taken of down stream navigation and from Henry House boats transported the furs down the Athabaska to Fort Assiniboine. The pack horses at the same time travelled light over the mountains on the return journey. From Fort Assiniboine horses were again used to pack the furs the remainder of the journey to the trans-shipping point at Fort Edmonton.

The Hudson's Bay Company in building afresh, however, did not re-occupy the original site on the "lower flat", where the Edmonton city power plant now stands. At a time of high water this ground had been flooded in the past and in consequence in building anew a place on higher ground was selected on the

"bench" below the site of the present Legislative Buildings,where the bowling green is now located. The new post of the North-West Company was on the "upper flat", where the municipal golf course is now and near what was the western boundary of the Hudson's Bay reserve. The Honourable Frank Oliver tells that in 1876,when he came to Edmonton , both old riverside posts built in 1808 could be plainly traced from grass-grown depressions and that their active existence was within the memory of residents then living.(1)

The period of intense rivalry between the Nor'Westers and the Hudson's Bay Company, resulting at times in the bitterest feeling and even bloodshed,lasted from 1811 to 1821. The amalgamation of the two companies took place at the latter date. The Montreal company's interests generally before the union had been much more important than those of its rival: it had been much more aggresive in the way of exploration and expansion. After the reoccupation of the Edmonton site in 1819 there was of necessity a large number of white employees stationed at this trans-shipping point in the route across the continent. The North-West Company had its headquarters in Montreal and,although its principal officers were mostly Scottish, the voyageurs and other employees at its

(1) Oliver, Hon. Frank, article in Queen's Quarterly,Kingston,Ont., Winter, 1930, p 80.

western posts were mainly French Canadians from the Montreal neighborhood. It had been the policy of the North-West Company to encourage these employees to marry with the native women and remain in the country. The Hudson's Bay Company brought out their men from the Orkneys,Shetlands and Hebrides and they were under contract to return them to their homes at the termination of their tenure of service. Many of them,however, did marry native women and settled in the country.

When the union of the two companies was consummated under the name of the Hudson's Bay Company,the new organization retained as many as possible of the employees of both the earlier companies at the different posts. In the reorganization the Hudson's Bay Company took over the North-West Company's practice of having wintering partners and these were chosen from both sides. When the posts were distributed, it is said that, in recognition of the fact that the Montreal company's factors and traders had had more experience in the inland Indian territory and were therefore more capable of successfully trading with the natives, the more important posts were given to the Nor'Westers. The chief factorship in the Saskatchewan district,however, with headquarters at Fort Edmonton, was assigned to James Sutherland, a Hudson's Bay Company man, with John Rowand, a former Nor'Wester, as chief trader. Shortly afterwards,in 1825,John Rowand was promoted to the rank of chief factor. He and his successor,William Christie ,were

spoken of as the two greatest factors who presided at Edmonton House.

The amalgamation,however, did necessitate some reduction of forces here as elsewhere and a number were dismissed. Many of these, mostly Nor'Westers, who had married native women,remained,settled down in the neighborhood and began to farm. A considerable half-breed population,therefore, grew up in the Edmonton region with French descent on the father's side. Those remaining in the Saskatchewan district,after their term of service had expired or after being discharged at the union,settled around Lac Ste. Anne and Lac La Biche. The choosing of these lakes as centres of settlement was in accordance with the old Indian custom,that of selecting as a site for more or less permanent dwelling fresh water lakes where fish were to be had in plenty. These lakes in question abounded with whitefish which ranked next to buffalo meat as the staple diet of the country. In addition, there was the added advantage of isolation: for in this wooded country north of the Saskatchewan river they were secure from Blackfoot raids. These half-breeds constituted a self-dependent, permanent part of the population. They knew the country thoroughly and knew equally the ways of both Indians and whites. They hunted the buffalo,trapped for fur and did a little farming. Some of them were regularly or occasionally employed by the Hudson's Bay Company in freighting,voyaging and trading. They were designated as "freemen" to distinguish them from the permanent employees of the Company.

Not only was Fort Edmonton a strategic point in a trans-continental trade route and a nucleus of white and half-breed settlement but it derived additional importance from the fact that it was the logical centre of trade for a number of powerful Indian tribes,principally Crees and members of the Blackfoot confederacy. It was situated in the heart of the Cree country. Of the Crees, a numerous nation widely extended through the West, tribes of Plains Crees and Strong Wood Crees were to be found spread over a large part of the country now known as Alberta. Roughly speaking, the area of the Wood Cree country was on both sides of the Saskatchewan River westwards from the Beaver Hills and particularly north of the river. The principal occupation of this band was fur hunting and fishing with an occasional trip to the plains after the buffalo. The Plains Cree country was eastwards from the Beaver Hills and south from the Saskatchewan River to the Battle River. The Plains Crees followed the buffalo hunt in summer and killed great numbers the flesh of which they dried or made into pemmican for winter use. Only an occasional forage after fresh meat was made in the winter. Both branches of the Crees were enemies of the Blackfoot but as the Plains Crees were nearer this confederacy there was more occasion for friction over their respective hunting grounds and therefore the hostility between the two was more acute than with the more remote Wood Crees. The Plains and Wood Crees were more friendly to the whites than were the warlike Blackfoot.

The Blackfoot occupied territory south of the Red Deer River. Between the Red Deer and the Battle rivers there lay a more or less disputed country, a common hunting and fighting ground for Blackfoot and Plains Crees. Tribal war between Blackfoot and Crees was constant. The Mountain Stoneys were another nation that traded at Fort Edmonton . Their country was in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains north of Rocky Mountain House and west of Edmonton. They always maintained a friendly attitude to the whites and to the Crees,but like the latter were hostile to the Blackfoot. Their number was not large but they brought fine furs to the Fort,which made them customers to be encouraged. It was their habit,when coming to trade at Edmonton,to camp a few miles west of the Fort. From the fact that it was the camping site of the Stoneys this ground came to be called Stoney Plain. The Wood and Plains Crees and Stoneys traded at Fort Edmonton all the year round,but the Blackfoot, living at a greater distance, paid a visit once and sometimes twice a year, in summer or in autumn,although the post at Rocky Mountain House was nearer and within their territory. Whenever they came to Fort Edmonton to trade,situated as it was in the heart of their enemies' country which they had to traverse,the Blackfoot always brought a sufficiently strong force to make it safe for themselves often being reinforced by their Piegan and Blood allies. After crossing the Battle River at its most northerly bend, the route to

Edmonton followed what was later known as the Hay Lakes trail, now the route of the Canadian National Railway between Camrose and Edmonton. Proceeding over this trail the Blackfoot crossed a short stretch of Wood Cree country and as this was the tribe with whom their enmity was not so intense, they were therefore inclined to take a risk. The Blackfoot were always mounted on good horses and were buffalo hunters. They, therefore, came swiftly and usually could conduct their trade and get under way again before the Crees could muster their forces. Sometimes, however, there were skirmishes between the tribes with losses on both sides. The officials at Fort Edmonton always took what precautions they could to keep the peace or forestall any attacks and their efforts met with varying degrees of success.(1)

The method of conducting the actual trade with the Indians at the western posts was the product of a long evolution. Practically the same routine prevailed at all the posts modified somewhat where experience had shown certain tribes to be more or less hostile and difficult to handle. At Fort

(1) Oliver, Honourable Frank, article in Edmonton Bulletin, September 17th, 1921.

Edmonton in the very early days trading was carried on at the gate. Gradually, perhaps after repeated visits, small groups of Indians were allowed to enter the enclosure through the small wicket gate which led directly to the Indian house. The interior of this building was divided into two parts by a stout counter. The large section contained the miscellaneous assortment of goods to be exchanged for furs and was in charge of the trader, the smaller one provided space for the customers to stand. On the counter lay a loaded blunderbuss ready for emergencies in case the red customers proved troublesome. The Indians, on entering, delivered their furs to the trader who alone of the Company's employees was allowed to have direct dealings with them. The trader, after examining the skins offered, announced what value he was prepared to give for them. At one period, eight to twelve beaver skins were considered the equivalent of a gun, one for half a pound of powder, a pound of tobacco or a half pound of beads. In the very early days of the fur trade the scale of payment was left to the factor's judgment, but in the course of years the London office of the Hudson's Bay Company found it expedient to issue an annual tariff to be followed in the barter for furs at the various posts. This was in the main adhered to and finally

became a nominal standard called a "castor" or a "made beaver" or a "skin". (1)

In the very early years,the Indians' wants were few and the system of barter was sufficient. As the stock at the trading posts became more varied and the Indian could choose from cloth, capotes, blankets, caps, shirts, guns, powder horns, knives, kettles, needles, fish-hooks, paint, beads, and a great many other things, the simple barter method was difficult to manage. The trader then devised a "temporary currency". After computing the value of the furs at so many "made beaver" the Indian was handed an equivalent number of porcupine quills or small wooden pegs, each of which represented one "beaver" or "skin". When he had made his selection of goods, food, powder and tobacco, he handed over the tokens representing the price. It was characteristic of the native temperament that the Red man never budged from the trading-house until he had expended all his tokens. The Indians were often given goods on credit, that is they "took debt" to tide them over until they returned with the proceeds of the next hunt

(1) Schooling,Sir William, A History of the Hudson's Bay Company, London, 1920, the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Hudson's Bay Comany,
and
The Catalogue of the Hudson's Bay Company's Historical Exhibit,Winnipeg, Man.

and it is recorded seldom defaulted in their obligations. Even in the case of death their families assumed the responsibility. Of those who came regularly to trade from the bands in the nearby district particularly, the Company's men knew the character and reputation of each and whether their honesty could be relied on or not.(1)

During the years that rum was used in the trade,the Indian house at Fort Edmonton witnessed stirring scenes. The fire-water was of course well diluted but even then produced an effect sometimes of hilarity and sometimes of quarrelsomeness. For the Cree Indians the rum offered was composed of three parts of water to one of spirits, that for the Blackfoot,who evidently had proved to be less hardened topers, the proportion was seven of water to one of spirits. There were times when wild scenes occurred, when the intoxicated savages drew their knives or discharged their guns. The walls of the Indian trading room at the Edmonton post were said to show many evidences of bullet marks and knife hackings. When the intoxicated Indians succumbed to stupor and could be removed by companions, then peace reigned once more in the trader's domain.(2)

(1) Schooling,Sir William, A History of the Hudson's Bay Company,London, 1920, the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company
and

The Catalogue of the Hudson's Bay Company's Historical Exhibit,Winnipeg, Man.

(2) Ibid.

The personnel in such a large service as that of the Hudson's Bay Company was divided into ranks or grades and was subject to strict discipline. The apprentice-clerk,generally a boy fresh from school and without any experience, served by contract for five years. At the expiration of this period, if his services were satisfactory, he became a clerk and signed another contract for three years. From that grade a still longer period of service was necessary until promotion took place to the ranks of trader, junior chief trader, chief trader or half-shareholder, and the subsequent gradations of factor or shareholder, chief factor and inspecting chief factor. The lowest commissioned rank was that of junior chief trader. Above that grade were the officers, while below it all employees,whether white, half-breed or Indian,were known as clerks and servants. The Indians were employed by the Company as trappers, guides, boat-men, interpreters, etc.

It had been the policy of the North-West Company to give their officials a share in the profits of the company . This phase of their rival's administration the Hudson's Bay Company adopted at the time of the amalgamation. At that time it was agreed that two-fifths of the profits should revert to the factors and chief traders.

A system of maintenance was established at each Hudson's Bay post. Rations were distributed to the different ranks of employees according to fixed rules. The official in charge of the provisions had to keep a careful record in the "Provision Book" of the provisions in stock, their weight and quantities and of all allowances given out. He thus knew at a glance just what stock he had on hand. There was a certain fixed winter allowance. The factor received so many pounds of flour, sugar, tea, butter, raisins, candles, and so many gallons of port, sherry and brandy. The share of the chief trader was half that of his superior officer; while to a chief clerk went half the quantity alloted to the chief trader and so on down the scale. There was also what was known as the "voyage allowance" which was given out to the officer in charge of the brigade on its annual trip to York Factory and to the men who made up its personnel. To the official in charge of a post was granted an extra allowance of provisions for the entertainment of visitors who from time to time came to the post and to whom it was the policy of the Company to give unstinted hospitality. This was known as the"strangers' mess allowance" . (1)

(1) Moberly, H.J., Chief Factor,
Reminiscences of a Hudson's Bay Company Factor.
Toronto,1929.

The factor was the supreme authority in his small domain and his duties were many and varied. In the main, he followed instructions sent from the headquarters of the Company in London,England, or those which emanated from the deliberations at the annual meeting of the factors held at Norway House. The rest was left to his own judgment. Besides his duties of directing the various activities of the post-- the trade with the Indians, the preparation of the outgoing cargoes of furs carried by the brigades on their long eastward journey,the despatching of the brigades and, in turn, their reception, the sending to the interior posts the incoming supplies for the trade and for the maintenance of the Company's men stationed there--the factor was sometimes called upon to administer justice. This official did assume magisterial authority, when it was necessary. There was the occasional brawl, theft and even murder that had to be dealt with and punishment meted out. In addition, factors considered they were the sole agents through which approach could be made to the Indians. As a rule, they did not even like the missionaries to have contact with the Indians but through them. They endeavoured to establish friendly relations with the Indians both to promote the trade and to keep an eye on them .

As in other Hudson's Bay posts the establishment at Edmonton had a fixed routine for all connected with it, which was maintained with strict discipline. A bell over the gate announced the hour for commencing and ceasing work and was also rung at sundown as a signal for closing the gates for the night.

CHAPTER II

Fort Edmonton as seen by Visitors

1825- 1860

From the pens of various travellers who sojourned at different times and for varying periods at Fort Edmonton we get interesting pictures of its buildings, its people and its life. One of the earliest of these visitors was Alexander Ross who accompanied Governor Simpson from Spokane House to Rupert's Land in 1825 and spent a few days at Fort Edmonton, while waiting for the boat brigade to start for York Factory. He describes the post as "a large compact establishment with good buildings, palisades and bastions," from which "an extensive and profitable trade is carried on with the warlike tribes of the plains."(1) The official then in charge was Chief Factor Rowand, a former partner in the North-West Company, of whom Ross gives a pen picture- "Mr. Chief Factor Rowand who has been long here is the chief man of what is called the Saskatchewan District. By him we were received with open arms. Gentlemen of the service are in the habit of receiving all strangers, whether of high or low rank, with courtesy and affability. From motives of interest also, all Indians visiting the establishment are welcomed with kindness and treated as children by the

(1) Ross, Alexander,The Fur Hunters of the Far West,London, 1855, v II, p 210.

traders. Thus all these roving savages look up to Mr. Rowand as their common father and he has for more than a quarter of a century taught them to love and fear him." (1)

The evening of their arrival, in honour of the presence of the Governor, a grand ball was given by the Chief Factor, which the entire population arrayed in their best attire attended. Ross praises the affair. "I had often heard the females of Fort des Prairies were celebrated for their attractions and I must say that the report had not in the least degree exaggerated their accomplishments. Modest and unassuming they dressed well,danced well and made a good show of fineries. In short the whole affair was conducted with much good taste and decorum."(2)

During his stay Ross looked about the Fort and commented on the excellent management of the place- "Even at this early day thanks to the gift for discipline of Mr. Rowand the population had assumed a moral,orderly,industrious character. I had seen few places in the country where domestic arrangements either within doors or without were conducted with so much propriety as at this place. At almost every other post men and women are to be seen congregating together during the sports and amusements of the men. But it is not so here. I did not see a woman, old or young, married or single

(1) Ross, Alexander, The Fur Hunters of the Far West, London, 1855, v II, p 210.

(2) Ibid, v II, p 209.

going about the place idle; all seemed to keep at home and be employed about their own affairs. This reflects great credit upon Mr. Rowand and his family." (1)

The agricultural activities about the Fort were also described by this traveller- "Attached to this place are two large parks for raising grain and the soil being good, it produces large crops of barley and potatoes, but the spring and fall frosts prove injurious to wheat, which in consequence seldom comes to maturity." (2)

Near to the fields under cultivation was a race course some two miles in length. Here,horse-racing,one of the chief summer sports of the establishment, was indulged in. Ross was impressed by the size and quality of the animals kept and he enjoyed a good gallop around the course on a very spirited steed of Mr. Rowand's. (3)

After a delay of a fortnight for the travellers the boat-brigade for York Factory was ready to start. It consisted on this occasion of twelve barges,roomy and comfortable and propelled by oars. Each boat was capable of carrying a cargo of one hundred

(1) Ross, Alexander, The Fur Hunters of the Far West, London, 1855, v II, p 210.

(2) Ibid. v II, p 210.

(3) Ibid. v II, p 211.

packets, each of one hundred pounds weight. The down cargo consisted in every case of the annual catch of furs and the up cargo of the supplies for the succeeding season's trade. The round trip consumed on an average four and a half months. The annual departure of the boat brigade was one of the chief events in the life of the community of early Edmonton. (1)

Sir George Simpson, the first Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land under the amalgamated companies, who in that capacity ruled for forty years from 1821 to his death in 1861, paid ceremonial visits to the various posts from time to time. The "Emperor Governor", as he was known, travelled in grand style accompanied by servants and piper. On the occasion of one such visit to Edmonton in the summer of 1841, he gives a description of the fort as it appeared to him.

"Edmonton is a well built place, something of a hexagon in form. It is surrounded by high pickets and bastions, which, with the battlemented gateway, the flagstaff, etc. give it a good deal of a martial appearance and it occupies a commanding situation, crowning an almost perpendicular point on the bank, which at this spot is almost two hundred feet high ..... The fort both inside and out is decorated with paintings and devices to suit the taste of the savages that frequent it. Over the gateways are

(1) Ross, Alexander, The Fur Hunters of the Far West, London, 1855, v II, p 213.

a most fanciful variety of vanes but the hall of which both ceiling and the walls present the gaudiest colours and the most fantastic sculptures absolutely rivets the astonished natives to the spot with wonder and admiration. The buildings are smeared with a red earth found in the neighborhood which, when mixed with oil,produces a durable brown."(1)

Mention is also made of a tour of the 'farm' on the occasion of this visit and of the barley grown for the maintenance of a large herd of dairy cattle. The garden was also noticed as producing potatoes,turnips and a few other hardy vegetables.(2)

Sir George describes the coming of some Indians to the Fort during this visit. "On the third day after our arrival the firing of guns on the opposite side of the river which was heard early in the morning announced the approach of nine native chiefs who came forward in advance of a camp of fifty lodges which was again followed by a camp of six times the size. These chiefs were Blackfoot,Piegan,Sarcee and Blood Indians all dressed in their gaudiest clothes and decorated with scalp-locks. I paid them a visit and gave each of them some tobacco. Instead of receiving their presents with the usual indifference of savages, they thanked me in rotation,and,taking my hand in theirs,made

(1) Simpson,Sir George,Narrative of a Journey Round the World during the Years 1841-42,London,1847, v I, p 101.

(2) Ibid. v I,p 105.

long prayers to me as a high and powerful conjurer. They implored me to grant that their horses might always be swift, that the buffalo might constantly abound and that their wives might live long and look young. One of them vented his gratitude in a song and another blessed the house in which he had been so well treated."(1) A few days later, Sir George, in preparing to depart,took canny precautions to forestall being robbed by these over grateful dusky visitors.

Paul Kane, the Canadian artist, who made the round trip from Canada to Fort Vancouver in 1846-47 for the purpose of making a series of pictures "illustrative of the North American Indians,their manners and customs and of the scenery of an almost unknown country"(2) paid a visit to Edmonton en route. From the pages of his diary, in which he faithfully recorded the progress of his journey in considerable detail, one gets a most interesting description of Fort Edmonton and the life around the post in the years 1846 to 1848. Kane travelled from Norway House westward in company with Factor Rowand and the returning brigade. On their arrival at Fort Carleton, Factor Rowand, the artist and the Reverend Robert Rundle,a missionary stationed at Edmonton at the time,who had waited at Carleton to accompany them,decided to make the rest of the journey on horseback. Fort Edmonton was reached on September 26th, 1846, and the party "were greeted by the occupants of the Fort in

(1) Simpson,Sir George,Narrative of an Overland Journey Round the World during the years 1841-42, London,1847, v 1, p 104.

(2) Kane,Paul,Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America,London, 1859, p viii.

their gayest attire, the day being Sunday." (1)

As the artist intended to cross the mountains with the men in charge of the pack of otter skins paid annually by the Company to the Russian government for the rent of the northwest coast, he had to remain at Fort Edmonton until the arrival of the boats with the furs and while so doing he "took a sketch of the Fort and having leisure went a good deal among the Indians who are constantly about the Fort for the purpose of trading;they were principally Crees and Assiniboines."(2)

Of his first impressions of the place Paul Kane entered the following description in his journal: "Edmonton is a large establishment as it has to furnish many other districts with provisions, a large supply is always kept on hand, consisting entirely of dried meat, tongues and pimmi-kon. (3) There are usually here a chief factor and a clerk, with forty or fifty men with their wives and children amounting altogether to about one hundred and thirty, who all live within the pickets of the fort. Their employment consists chiefly in building

(1) Kane, Paul, Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America, London, 1859,p 135.

(2) Ibid, p 138.

(3) In the Cree language pimmi signifies meat , and kon,fat- Kane, Paul,Wanderings of an Artist among the North American Indians, p 78.

boats for the trade, sawing timber, most of which they raft down the river from ninety miles higher up, cutting up the small poplar which abound on the margin of the river for fire-wood, eight hundred cords of which are consumed every winter, to supply the numerous fires in the establishment. The employment of the women who are all without a single exception either squaws or half-breeds, consists in making moccasins and clothing for the men, and converting the dried meat into pimmi-kon." (1)

Paul Kane left Edmonton on his long and arduous journey through the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Coast on October 6th, 1846, and reached the post again on his return journey on December 5th, 1847, where he intended to spend the winter. After such strenuous travelling the comforts of the fort seemed to appeal to him greatly: of this he wrote- "On the evening of the 5th we arrived at Fort Edmonton where I was most kindly received by Mr. Harriett and provided with a comfortable room to myself- a luxury I had not known for many months. This was to be my headquarters for the winter and certainly no place in the interior is at all equal to it either in comfort or interest." (2)

His longer sojourn during the winter gave the artist a more ample opportunity to make observations on his surroundings and his journal is replete with interesting information in this respect.

(1) Kane, Paul, Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America, London, 1859, p 136ff.

(2) Ibid. p 365.

He found plenty of material for his artist's brush among the natives who visited the fort-- "As for seeing the aborigines no place can be more advantageous. Seven of the most important and warlike tribes on the continent are in constant communication with the fort, which is situated in the country of the Crees and Assiniboines, and is visited at least twice a year by the Blackfoot,Surcees,Gros Vents, Paygans, and Blood Indians, who come to sell the dried buffalo meat and fat for making pemmi-kon which is prepared in larger quantities for the supply of the other posts."(1)

Food was in abundance at the Edmonton post during the winter of Paul Kane's stay and this fact together with comments on the agricultural activities around the fort were noted in his journal: "Provisions are in the greatest plenty,consisting of fresh buffalo meat, venison,salted geese,magnificent white fish,and rabbits in abundance with plenty of good potatoes,turnips and flour. The potatoes are very fine, and the turnips do well here. Of wheat they can of course have only one crop; but with very indifferent farming they manage to get from twenty to twenty-five bushels per acre. The corn is ground in a windmill,which had been erected since my last visit, and seemed to make very good flour. Indian corn has been tried but it did not succeed,owing to the very short summer."(2)

(1) Kane,Paul, Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America,London,1859, p 366ff.

(2) Ibid. p 366.

A particularly delectable breakfast in this year of plenty, of which the artist partook just before setting forth on a buffalo hunt, so appealed to his palate as to merit description- "In the morning we breakfasted most heartily on white fish and buffalo tongues, accompanied by tea,milk, sugar and galettes, which the voyageurs consider a great luxury. These are cakes made of simple flour and water, and baked by clearing away a place near the fire; the cake is then laid on the hot ground and covered with hot ashes, where it is allowed to remain until sufficiently baked. They are very light and pleasant and are much esteemed."(1)

The method adopted at Fort Edmonton for the preservation of the meat secured in the winter to ensure a supply in its fresh state for use during the rest of the year also attracted Kane's attention. The ice-pit,whose primitive construction is described in detail, would have rivalled a modern cold-storage plant for efficiency: "The men had already commenced gathering their supply of fresh meat for the summer in the ice-pit. This is made by digging a square hole, capable of containing seven hundred or eight hundred buffalo carcases. As soon as the ice in the river is of sufficient thickness, it is cut into square blocks of a uniform size with saws; with these blocks the floor of the pit is regularly paved, and the blocks cemented together by pouring water in between them and allowing it to freeze solid. In like manner

(1) Kane, Paul, Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America,London,1859, p 369.

the walls are solidly built up to the surface of the ground. The head and feet of the buffalo when killed are cut off and the carcass,without being skinned, is divided into quarters and piled in layers in the pit as brought in, until it is filled up, when the whole is covered with a thick coating of straw,which is again protected from the sun and rain by a shed. In this manner the meat keeps perfectly good through the whole summer and eats much better than fresh killed meat,being more tender and better flavoured."(1) The use of the ice-pit for the preservation of meat had been a common practice at the fur-trading posts for many years. As far back as 1810,Alexander Henry of the North-West Company noted in his journal on the occasion of the abandonment of Fort Vermilion for the Terre Blanche location,- May 31st,- "At ten we all mounted..... leaving our ice-house open containing about four hundred limbs of buffalo still frozen."(2)

The buffalo ranged close to the fort in thousands during the winter of 1847 and 1848 and Paul Kane was initiated into the excitement of a buffalo hunt soon after he reached the post: "Shortly after my arrival,Mr. Harriett,myself, and two or three gentlemen of the establishment,prepared for a buffalo hunt. We had our choice of splendid horses, as about a dozen are selected and kept in stables for the gentlemen's use from the wild band of seven or eight hundred, which

(1) Kane,Paul, Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America,London, 1859, p 367.

(2) Coues,Elliott,ed., New Light on the Early History of the Greater North-West,Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson,1799-1814, New York,1897, v II, p 601.

roam about the fort,and forage for themselves throughout the winter by scraping the snow away from the long grass with their hoofs. These horses have only one man to take care of them who is called the horse-keeper; he follows them about and encamps near them with his wife turning the band should he perceive them going too far away. This would appear to be a most arduous task; but instinct soon teaches the animals that their only safety from their great enemies,the wolves, is by remaining near the habitations of man; and by keeping in one body they are enabled to fight the bands of wolves which they often drive off after severe contests. Thus they do not stray very far away, and they never leave the band. These horses are kept and bred there for the purpose of sending off the pemmi-kon and stores to other forts during the summer; in winter they are almost useless on account of the depth of snow.

"In the morning we mounted our chosen horses, and got upon the track the men had made on the river by hauling wood. This we followed for about six miles, when we espied a band of buffaloes on the bank; but a dog who had sneaked after us, running after them, gave the alarm too soon, and they started off at full speed, much to our disappointment. We caught the dog and tied his legs together, and left him lying in the road to await our return.

"After going about three miles farther, we came to a place where the snow was trodden down in every direction and on ascending the bank, we found ourselves in the close vicinity of an enormous band of buffaloes, probably numbering nearly ten thousand. An Indian hunter started off for the purpose of turning some of them towards us; but

the snow was so deep that the buffaloes were either unable or unwilling to run far and at last came to a dead stand. We therefore secured our horses and advanced towards them on foot to within forty or fifty yards when we commenced firing which we continued to do until we were tired of a sport so little exciting; for strange to say,they never tried either to escape or to attack us.

"Seeing a very large bull in the herd, I thought I would kill him for the purpose of getting the skin of his enormous head and preserving it. He fell: but as he was surrounded by three others that I could not frighten away,I was obliged to shoot them all before I could venture near him, although they were all bulls and they are not generally saved for meat. The sport proving rather tedious from the unusual quietness of the buffaloes we determined to return home and send the men for the carcasses and remounted our horses. "(1)

Then came the preparations for the bringing in of the kill the details of which were noted at some length in the journal; "On our return, we told the men to get the dog-sledges ready to go in the morning to bring in the cows we had killed, numbering twenty-seven, with the head of the bull I wanted; whereupon the squaws and half-breed women who have always this job to do started off to catch the requisite number of dogs. About the fort there are always two or three hundred who forage for themselves like the horses and lie outside. These dogs are quite as

(1) Kane, Paul, Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America,London ,1859, p 368ff.

valuable there as horses, as it is with them that everything is drawn over the snow. Two of them will easily draw in a large cow; yet no care is taken of them except that of beating them sufficiently before using them to make them quiet for the time they are in harness. It would be almost impossible to catch these animals who are almost as wild as wolves were it not for the precaution which is taken in the autumn of catching the dogs singly by stratagem and tying light logs to them which they can drag about. By this means the squaws soon catch as many as they want and bring them into the fort where they are fed-- sometimes-- before being harnessed. This operation is certainly (if it were not for the cruelty exhibited) one of the most amusing scenes I had witnessed. Early next morning I was aroused by a yelling and screaming that made me rush from my room, thinking that we were all being murdered; and there I saw the women harnessing the dogs. Such a scene! The women were like so many furies with big sticks, threshing away at the poor animals who rolled and yelled in agony and terror until each team was yoked up and started off.

"During the day the men returned bringing the quartered cows ready to be put in the ice-pit, and my big head which before skinning, I had put in the scales, and found that it weighed exactly two hundred and two pounds. The skin of the head I brought home with me."(1)

(1) Kane, Paul, Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America, London, 1859, p 371.

The daily routine around the Fort was also depicted by the artist. He was much impressed with the absence of idleness and by the general air of activity about the post- "The fort at this time of year presented a most pleasing picture of cheerful activity: every one was busy; the men, some in hunting and bringing in the meat when the weather permitted, some in sawing boards in the saw-pit and building the boats, about thirty feet long and six feet beam, which go as far as York Factory, and are found more convenient for carrying goods on the Saskatchewan and Red Rivers than canoes. They are mostly built at Edmonton,because there are more boats required to take the peltries to York Factory than are required to bring goods back; and more than one-half of the boats built here never return. This system requires them to keep constantly building.

"The women find ample employment in making mocassins and clothes for the men, putting up pemmi-kon in ninety-pound bags, and doing all the household drudgery, in which the men never assist them. The evenings are spent round their large fires in eternal gossiping and smoking. The sole musician of the establishment, a fiddler, is now in great requisition amongst the French part of the inmates, who give full vent to their national vivacity, whilst the more sedate Indian looks on with solemn enjoyment."(1)

(1) Kane, Paul, Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America, London, 1859, p 373.

Many Christmases had come and gone at the Edmonton trading-post over the course of years but the Christmas celebration at the Fort in the year 1847 appears to be the first to be recorded in any considerable detail. Kane evidently enjoyed the Christmas atmosphere and entered with great zest into the entertainment provided. His account of this festive occasion also includes an excellent description of the appearance of the dining-hall or gentlemen's mess room of the fort:- "On Christmas day the flag was hoisted and all appeared in their best and gaudiest style to do honour to the holiday. Towards noon every chimney gave evidence of being in full blast , whilst savoury steams of cooking pervaded the atmosphere in all directions. About two o'clock we sat down to dinner. Our party consisted of Mr. Harriett, the chief, and three clerks, Mr. Thebo, the Roman Catholic missionary from Manitou Lake, about thirty miles off, Mr. Rundell, the Wesleyan missionary, who resided within the pickets and myself, the wanderer, who though returning from the shores of the Pacific ,was still the latest importation from civilized life.

"The dining-hall in which we assembled was the largest room in the fort, probably about fifty by twenty-five feet,well warmed by large fires, which are scarcely every allowed to go out. The walls and ceilings are boarded, as plastering is not used,there being no limestone within reach; but these boards are painted in a style of the most startling barbaric gaudiness, and the ceiling filled with centre-pieces of fantastic gilt scrolls, making

altogether a saloon which no white man would enter for the first time without a start, and which the Indians always looked upon with awe and wonder.

"The room was intended as a reception room for the wild chiefs who visited the fort; and the artist who designed the decorations was no doubt directed to 'astonish the natives'. If such were his instructions, he deserves the highest praise for having faithfully complied with them..... No table-cloth shed its snowy whiteness over the board; no silvercandelabra or gaudy china interfered with its simple magnificence. The bright tin plates and dishes reflected jolly faces and burnished gold can give no truer zest to a feast.

"Perhaps it might be interesting..... if I were to describe the fare set before us to appease appetites nourished by constant out-door exercise in an atmosphere ranging at forty to fifty degrees below zero. At the head, before Mr. Harriett,was a large dish of boiled buffalo hump; at the foot smoked a buffalo calf. Start not, gentle reader, the calf is very small, and is taken from the cow by the Caesarian operation long before it attains its full growth. This, boiled whole, is one of the most esteemed dishes amongst the epicures of the interior. My pleasing duty was to help a dish of mouffle, or dried moose nose; the gentleman on my left distributed, with graceful impartiality, the white fish delicately browned in buffalo marrow. The worthy priest helped the buffalo tongue, whilst Mr. Rundell cut up the beavers' tails. Nor was the other

gentleman left unemployed, as all his spare time was spent in dissecting a roast wild goose. The centre of the table was graced with piles of potatoes, turnips, and bread conveniently placed so that each could help himself without interrupting the labours of his companions. Such was our jolly Christmas dinner at Edmonton; and long will it remain in my memory,although no pies or puddings or blanc manges shed their fragrance over the scene.

"In the evening the hall was prepared for the dance to which Mr. Harriett had invited all the intimates of the fort, and was easily filled by the gaily dressed guests. Indians, whose chief ornament consisted in the paint on their faces, voyageurs with bright sashes and neatly ornamented mocassins, half-breeds glittering in every ornament they could lay their hands on; whether civilized or savage, all were laughing and jabbering in as many different languages as there were styles of dress. English,however, was little used, as none could speak it but those who sat at the dinner table. The dancing was most picturesque and almost all joined in it. Occasionally, I among the rest led out a young Cree squaw,who sported enough beads round her neck to have made a pedlar's fortune, and having led her into the centre of the room, I danced round her with all the agility I was capable of exhibiting to some highland reel tune which the fiddler played with great vigour,whilst my partner with grave face kept

jumping up and down, both feet off the ground at once, as only an Indian can dance. I believe, however, that we elicited a great deal of applause from Indian squaws and children who sat squatting round the room on the floor. Another lady with whom I sported the light fantastic toe, whose poetic name was Cun-ne-wa-bum ,or "One that looks at the stars" was a half-breed Cree girl; and I was so much struck by her beauty that I prevailed upon her to promise to sit for her likeness, which she afterwards did with great patience holding her fan, which was made of the tip end of a swan's wing with an ornamental handle of porcupine's quills,in a most coquettish manner.

"After enjoying ourselves with such boisterous vigour for several hours, we all gladly retired to rest about twelve o'clock, the guests separating in great good humour not only with themselves but with their entertainers."(1)

Paul Kane was also a guest at a wedding ceremony which took place at the factor's residence in the fort. Of this occasion he wrote - "On the 6th of January,1848, we had a wedding at Edmonton; the bride was the daughter of the gentleman in charge, Mr. Harriett, the bridegroom,Mr. Rowand, junior, who resided at Fort Pitt, a distance of two hundred miles from the establishment. After the ceremony which was performed by the Reverend Mr. Rundle,the

(1) Kane,Paul, Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America,London,1859, pp 374-78.

Methodist missionary,we spent a pleasant evening,feasting and dancing until midnight. Having received an invitation to accompany the happy pair on the journey home, I gladly accepted it as I began to find my amusements rather monotonous. Next morning I was awakened by the yelping of the dogs and the ringing of the bells on the dog-collars,accompanied by the shouts of the men thrashing the brutes into something like discipline as they harnessed them to the sledges and carioles. On coming into the yard I found our party nearly ready to start. It consisted of Mr. Rowand and his bride with nine men. We had three carioles and six sledges with four dogs to each, forming when en route a long and picturesque cavalcade: all the dogs gaudily decorated with saddle-cloths of various colours,fringed and embroidered in the most fantastic manner with innumerable small bells and feathers producing altogether a pleasing and enlivening effect. Our carioles were also handsomely decorated, the bride's more particularly which had been made expressly for the occasion and was elaborately painted and ornamented and was drawn by a set of dogs recently imported from Lower Canada by Mr. Rowand."(1)

(1) Kane, Paul, Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America,London,1859, p 385ff.

It is from Miss Katherine Hughes's account of the life and work of Father Lacombe that one gets the most picturesque and detailed description of Fort Edmonton and the life around the post at that period. The information contained therein came from the revered and intrepid missionary's own lips.

Father Lacombe, who had been sent by Bishop Taché in 1852 to take over the mission work in the North-West on account of the ill-health of Father Thibault, told of his travels westward from Cumberland House to Edmonton in the summer of that year with Chief Factor Rowand, who was returning from Norway House. Rowand with headquarters at Fort Edmonton, which was then the most important post west of Norway House, ruled like a governor over an area from Cumberland House to the Rocky Mountains. The journey up the Saskatchewan was by York boat, as canoes had been dispensed with at that time. Father Lacombe marvelled at the drudgery and labour entailed upon the boatmen hauling these heavy boats up against the current of the river from early morning until darkness set in. The arrival of the packet at the Fort

was the great event of the year. As soon as the boats were sighted around the bend in the river, the steward ran up the ensign, the cannon were got ready for the salute and all the inhabitants of the fort flocked down to the landing-stage. The shore was lined with people,members of the factor's family, clerks from the trading-shop,women and children and the chance Indian from near-by tepees. There were shouts of welcome as the boats drew near and the cannon from the bastion boomed forth a welcome as Factor Rowand stepped ashore.

The Chief Factor was noted for his fiery and irascible temper, though he had a kind heart beneath it all and was warmly regarded by his people. Miss Hughes has set down the Reverend Father's description of the Chief Factor- "This man who was the most notable of the Company's officials on the plains then was an Irishman,a little man with eyes of blue steel, an incomparable temper and a spirit that did not know what fear was. He was intellectually bright, the master of several dialects and could terrorize an Indian in any one of them."(1) "Hah! he was like a can of powder..... that little man," said Father Lacombe.(2) "He was not

(1) Hughes,Katherine,Father Lacombe, New York, 1914, p 40.

(2) Ibid., p 43.

big; in fac' he was very short but he was brave that little man,you know- brave like a lion. He feared no man, not even a whole tribe of Indians could make him afraid. Ah, he was a grand little man."(1)

Father Lacombe described the Fort as resembling "a rude baronial stronghold in the feudal ages of the old world with liege's hall and retainers' cottages,all safely enclosed within high palisades surmounted by guns."(2) This eighteen foot palisade was made of stout trees split in half and driven into the ground,the whole reinforced by binding timbers around it. Four strong bastions were situated at the corners. A narrow platform ran around the palisade on the inside about twelve feet from the ground. Cannon were mounted in the bastions and were adjusted so that they could be fired at any enemy bold enough to attempt to scale the stockade. Large iron balls were used for the cannon from which it was customary to fire a salute on the approach of travellers to the Fort. Sir George Simpson speaks of the welcome given him on the occasion of his visit in 1841-- "We notified our approach by a volley of musketry, which was returned by the cannon of the fort, and a boat was quickly dispatched to convey us across the river." (3). A member of a prospectors' party travelling to Cariboo in 1862 described the

(1) Hughes Katherine,Father Lacombe, New York,1914, p 55.

(2) Ibid. p 46.

(3) Simpson,Sir George, Narrative of a Journey Round the World during the Years 1841-42,London,1847, v I, p 101.

arrival of the party at Fort Edmonton and gave in detail the quaint method of firing the cannon-- "A salute was fired from a cannon on our approach to the Fort and the piece was fired in a manner I would not recommend to artillerymen of our day. A half-breed deliberately stationed himself a few yards off and fired his musket priming into the 'touch hole' and bang went the cannon without any accident amid the cheers of the whole crowd."(1)

The main gate of the Fort faced towards the steep bank of the river about sixty feet back from the break in the bank. It had a small window closed with a heavy log shutter through which goods were passed and furs taken in,whenever a troublesome tribe like the Blackfoot came to trade. There was also a small wicket gate in the palisade a short distance from the main gate which led to the Indian trading-house. Ordinarily, the gates were open during the day and closed at sundown at the ringing of the bell over the gate, but, if the Blackfoot came to trade in large numbers or if there were signs of trouble, all the gates were closed and trade or parley was conducted from the top of the palisade. The fort enclosure was to all intents and purposes a walled-town. It contained besides the chief factor's residence and houses for the

(1) McNaughton,Margaret,Overland to Cariboo, Toronto,1896, p 56.

traders,clerks and servants, the Indian trading-house,storehouses for furs and supplies,blacksmiths', carpenters' and boat-building shops.

Chief Factor Rowand, when he assumed control of the post in 1825, had constructed a commodious residence for himself. The "Big House",as it was called, was considered to be the most palatial building of its day between Norway House and the Pacific. It had been built for nearly a quarter of a century when Father Lacombe first saw it. It was a massive building about seventy feet deep and sixty feet wide, of squared timber, three stories high and with a gallery opening from the second story front and rear. It stood in the center of the palisaded enclosure and on the plot of grass which fronted it two brass cannon were placed. A high stair-case led from this front gallery down to the grassy court-yard about which were the Bachelors' Hall or Gentlemen's quarters, the Indian Hall, the warehouses, where furs and supplies were stored, and the log houses inhabited by the men in the Company's employ together with their wives and families. (1) "Within the 'Big House' this stairway to the second floor gallery opened upon a wide hall on either side of which lay two immense rooms, the Gentlemen's mess room and the ball-room. Behind these were the living-rooms of Rowand's

(1) Hughes,Katherine, Father Lacombe,
New York, 1914, p 47.

family; above, on the next story, were offices and bed-rooms; below stairs on the ground floor were the steward's office, the armory, store-rooms, and cellars. This was "Rowand's Folly" as the Gentlemen Adventurers were wont to call the most pretentious house west of York Factory." (1)

Father Lacombe spent the winter of 1852 at the Fort and at that time the population of the post numbered one hundred and fifty . This included boatmen, who had come into winter quarters, the steward, interpreters, boat-builders, coopers, carpenters, blacksmiths, hunters and their families. (2) During their winter's sojourn,until in the spring they set forth again with the brigade,the boatmen were employed as labourers. They made repairs to the various buildings of the fort, cut and hauled fire-wood,of which a great quantity was needed for the large earthen fireplaces, and occasionally fared forth to supplement provisions in the way of fish caught through the ice and the chance buffalo. Life around the Fort was a busy though monotonous one. The sound of the carpenters' hammers and the ring of the blacksmiths' anvil

(1) Hughes, Katherine, Father Lacombe, New York, 1914, p 47.

(2) Ibid, p 48.

were familiar sounds at the post throughout most of the year but particularly in summer. All of the heavy York boats used for the transportation of furs and supplies on the long journey between Edmonton and York Factory and return were constructed here. The large number of horses used in packing to and fro across the mountains on the Columbia route and which met the fur cargoes, descending the Athabaska River to Fort Assiniboine,were wintered at Edmonton or more properly speaking at the "horse-guard", a few miles away from the Fort. This in conjunction with the boat-building activity necessitated a considerable force of workmen and packers at the post and added to its importance as a centre.

Father Lacombe spoke of how he enjoyed his winter spent at Fort Edmonton and of how comfortably he was housed in a log house just east of the river gateway, which Factor Rowand kindly placed at his disposal and which served the purpose of both chapel and residence. He had "dined always at the mess-room of the Big House where,according to semi-military discipline, no woman ever ate and excellent meals were served by Robidoux,a chef from Montreal."(1) The Reverend Father found ample opportunity for his ministrations and led a busy life for "the inhabitants of the Fort from Rowand down to the youngest dog-runner were mostly Catholics and he busied himself instructing young and old daily. On Sunday,he tried to impress the Sabbath

(1) Hughes,Katherine,Father Lacombe,
New York,1914, p 49.

feeling by making the mass as solemn as possible and to this end he taught the French-Canadians to sing the liturgy of the mass."(1) Even after he had settled himself at the Lac Ste.Anne mission, fifty miles northwest of Edmonton,he made frequent visits to the Fort to minister to the spiritual needs of its inhabitants.

On the death of Rowand there were two other Chief Factors who held office at Fort Edmonton for brief periods and then were transferred to other posts. They were William Sinclair in 1856 and John Swanston in 1857. Sinclair's son,John,was also an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company and his daughter married William Christie who later was factor at Fort Edmonton. Christie succeeded Swanston and remained in charge until 1872, when he became Inspecting Chief Factor of all the Saskatchewan and Athabaska posts.

Sometime before the end of Rowand's regime,however, the importance of the transcontinental trade route via the North Saskatchewan,Edmonton and the Athabaska Pass, had become negligible by reason of the cession of the Oregon territory, that is the lower Columbia region ,to the United States in 1846, and the development of trade around Cape Horn to the Pacific coast. Edmonton lost her

(1) Hughes, Katherine,Father Lacombe,
New York, 1914, p 50.

prestige of being the main transfer point on a great transcontinental trade route and became only the chief Hudson's Bay trading post of the Saskatchewan district. That for some years after this change the route continued to be used to some extent is evidenced from an entry made in his journal by Dr. Hector, who along with Captain John Palliser was the next distinguished visitor to Fort Edmonton. He spent the winter of 1858-59 at the post and after a visit to Jasper House, under date of January 31st, 1859, wrote: "As late as 1853 there was communication at two seasons by this post with the Columbia district. In March, when the snow had acquired a crust, the express with letters and accounts started from Edmonton by the route I had just followed (1) and continued on to the Boat Encampment to which place by the time they arrived, owing to the earlier spring on the west side of the mountains, the brigade of boats had ascended From Vancouver. The mail from the western department was then exchanged and taken back to Edmonton and thence to Norway House along with the Jasper House furs. The second time of communication was in autumn after the Saskatchewan brigade had returned to Edmonton in the beginning of September when officers and men bound for the western department, taking with them the subsidy of otter skins that the Company annually paid to the Russian government for the

(1) via Lac Ste. Anne by way of the trail to the Athabaska River valley, over the ice of the Athabaska River to Fort Assiniboine, thence westward to Jasper House.

rent of the Northwest coast,made the portage to Fort Assiniboine,then ascended the Athabaska in boats to Jasper House, with pack-horses reached the Boat Encampment, and then descended the Columbia to Vancouver, where they arrived generally about the first of November. The journey from York Factory on Hudson's Bay to the Pacific Coast by this route generally occupied three and a half months, and involved an amount of hardship and toil that cannot be appreciated by those who have not seen boat travelling in these territories."(1)

Dr. Hector was a member of the expedition which had been sent out by the British Government in 1857 under Captain John Palliser to examine and report upon the route of travel between the Canadas and the country west of Lake Superior with regard to the possibilities for settlement and agricultural development and to ascertain any practicable passes available across the Rocky Mountains within British territory. A description of the post as it appeared to them is set down in a matter of fact way in the journal kept jointly by Palliser and Hector.

Dr. Hector was the first of the two leaders to arrive. Having been left in charge of the party at Fort Carleton,while Captain Palliser paid a visit to the boundary line on matters connected

(1) Palliser,Captain John,Journal,Detailed Reports and Observations relative to Exploration of British North America during 1857-60 made to the British Government,May 1863,London, 1863, p 125.

with the expedition,he decided to make a journey to Edmonton to explore the country and to engage half-breeds for their trip across the mountains the following season. Edmonton House was reached on December 30th,1857, and of his first impressions Dr. Hector entered the following account in his journal:

"Just at daylight we arrived at a very steep bank in descending which we came to the Saskatchewan and on following it for one bend we came in sight of Fort Edmonton standing on a most commanding point about one hundred feet above the river. We were soon up the bank and within the palisade and enjoyed the hospitable welcome of Mr. Swanston, who had been so kind and attentive to all of us at Fort Garry and who since then had been sent up to take charge of the Saskatchewan district. We found a large party assembled there enjoying the festivities of the season,some of them having come from as far north and west as I had from the east."(1)

Of the Fort itself,Dr. Hector noted- "Edmonton which is quite as large as Fort Garry, is wholly built of wood and is furnished with strong bastions and palisades, the latter being rather rotten to be a very sure defence. It stands on a steep bank immediately overhanging the river about one hundred feet above the water. Along and below this point are large flats of rich land only forty to fifty feet higher than the river which lies at the base of the higher bank." (2)

(1) Palliser, Journal, p 72.

(2) Ibid. p 72.

The flats and high bank are further described- "Both were at one time under cultivation to a considerable extent; but now the farm attached to the establishment though the only one in the Saskatchewan is of small size not exceeding thirty acres. On the hill behind the fort stands a windmill in which the stones were made by splitting a granite boulder that was found near the spot and these as may be supposed are not very serviceable. However, they manage when they get a gale of wind to grind some tolerable flour, quite enough to prove that if the business were properly conducted it might be a valuable source of support. Nine tenths of the little flour that is consumed in the Saskatchewan is brought either from Red River or all the way from England." (1)

As this was an expedition for the accumulation of data on topographical and meteorological conditions, natural resources and scientific information of various sorts, Dr. Hector's keen perception led him to set down many details in his journal, which give an excellent picture of Fort Edmonton and the surrounding country of that day. In this connection he wrote: "Edmonton must be considered as being in the wooded country but in the immediate vicinity of the Fort there is not much valuable timber. That used for boat building is brought from ten miles to the west and is the wood of the abies alba. Once back from the river banks which are everywhere high and precipitous the country is rather flat and covered with thickets of willow and poplar and with a much larger proportion

(1) Palliser, Journal, p 72.

of swampy ground than I have seen elsewhere in the Saskatchewan."(1)

Mention is made of the coal out-croppings in the steep clay river banks which "seem to be of a very useful quality as it is used to the exclusion of all other fuel in the forge at the fort. The smith who is also collier tells me that its quality differs according to the distance from the outcrop, especially if it be acted upon by the flood water which has a very deleterious effect on the beds..... Under the fort there are two seams of about eighteen inches each but on the opposite side of the river close to the water's edge there is a bed six feet thick and again another of four feet thick a little higher up the bank. In the middle of the six foot seam there is a very fine six inch parting of greenish magnesium pipe clay which works up into a lather and is used by the women of the fort for washing blankets."(2)

Of the variations of the weather there are many observations and in this connection Dr. Hector "arranged with Mr. Swanston,who has most kindly volunteered his services, to have a meteorological register kept at this place during the spring,the observations to be consecutive with the minimum and air thermometer at least,even when I may be absent."(3)

(1) Palliser,Captain John,Journal,Detailed Reports and Observations relative to Exploration of British North America during 1857-60 made to the British Government,May 1863,London,1863, p 72 .

(2) Ibid. p 72.

(72) Ibid, 72

The number of employees of the Company was recorded by Hector as fifty and the usual population of the Fort as one hundred and fifty- "It is here that boats for navigating the Saskatchewan are mostly built,about ten or twelve new ones being turned out every year; the Company have a larger staff of tradesmen and servants at this place than at any of the other posts of the district."(1) A brief description of the boats used by the river brigades was set down- "The barges are built at Edmonton of the wood of the white spruce, thirty feet long and when loaded carry from seventy to eighty pieces of ninety pounds weight each, drawing two to two and a half feet of water and requiring at least, when ascending the river, to be manned by a crew of eight men." (2)

Interesting information is given as to the food consumed at the post. Dr. Hector was astounded at the quantity. "These (the population) are all fed on buffalo meat and if there happens to be a good crop they get a certain small allowance of potatoes. The consumption of meat is enormous amounting to two buffalo a day on the average. It is no easy matter to supply this demand, especially of late years and the loss of horses from dragging the meat during the

(1) Palliser ,Journal, p 72.

(2) Ibid. p 82.

severities of the winter and the number of men employed for this purpose alone renders it a very expensive mode of feeding the establishment, although the first cost of killing the buffalo in the plains is merely nominal."(1) Dr. Hector also speaks of their diet being supplemented by an abundant supply of fish from Lac Ste Anne, and adds-"Mr. Swanston, the factor, kindly gave me the following census of the population which contains as a curious item the quantity of buffalo meat that is now served each day."(2)

Statement of daily expenditure of buffalo meat at Edmonton House

	Inhabitants in each house			Total number of persons	Pounds of fresh meat for each family per diem
	Men	Women	Children		
Galiman's house	1	1	-	2	12
Short's "	2	1	3	6	26
Raymond's "	2	3	4	9	40
Cameron's "	2	2	1	5	26
Cunningham's "	-	1	4	5	12
Finlay's "	1	1	5	7	18
Laderoute's "	2	1	5	8	40
Dumar's "	2	2	6	10	36
Savard's "	-	2	5	7	18
Salois's "	1	3	6	10	32
Cartouche's "	1	1	5	7	22
Hudson's "	3	1	4	8	44
Norwegians, 1st	4	-	-	4	32
Norwegians, 2nd	6	-	-	6	48
	27	19	48	94	406
Absent in the plains	15	-	-	15	120
	-	-	-	109	526

Edmonton House
February 2nd, 1858.

(1) Palliser, Journal, p 78.
(2) Ibid., p 78.

Dr. Hector's medical training led him to make diagnoses on the health of the inhabitants of the fort. An entry dated,February 6th, 1858,recorded the prevalence of influenza among the people, although he added- "There have been only two deaths in the community- a Norwegian who died in a fit of drunkenness at Christmas time and an infant from haemorrhage." (1) In the same entry one reads- "Goitre is very prevalent among the residents here and at Rocky Mountain House but in a modified form: I tabulated the details of fifty or sixty cases but have not discovered any one condition or habit of life that is common to all who suffer from this complaint. The only curious feature seems to be that children born at one fort are never attacked till removed to the other and again it disappears on their return to their native place." (2)

Captain John Palliser, after his second season of exploration which took him through the Rocky Mountains, reached Fort Edmonton on September 20th,1858. He found Mr. Brazeau in charge- "The fort was in charge of Mr. Brazeau,an American gentleman in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company,generally in charge of Rocky Mountain House during the winter but who comes down to the headquarters of the trade at Edmonton during the absence in the summer of the Chief Factor who leaves to attend the Council at Norway House, Lake Winnipeg." (3)

(1) Palliser,Journal, p 78

(2) Ibid.,p 78.

(3) Ibid., p 116

Captain Palliser also set down in his journal a description of the post . "Fort Edmonton, the largest fort of the Saskatchewan, is altogether built of wood, consisting of one good-sized house, two stories high, the habitation of the officer in charge of the fort; it also contained afterwards ourselves and some visitors. Adjoining the house are the storehouses of the company containing their goods, furs, etc., besides the log houses inhabited by the men engaged by the company together with their wives and their families. The whole is surrounded by wooden pickets firmly driven into the ground close together and about twenty feet high. In shape it is an irregular hexagon about one hundred yards long and seventy yards wide and contains a population of about forty men, thirty women and eighty children." (1)

Like his colleague, Captain Palliser makes note of how the food supply for the fort was obtained. "The population of the fort is almost entirely supported by buffalo meat, the hauling of which, for sometimes upwards of two hundred and fifty miles across the plains, is the source of great and most fruitless expense. Indeed, the labour and difficulty of providing for a consumption of seven hundred pounds of buffalo meat daily, and from so great a distance, would frequently become very precarious, were it not for an abundant supply of fish from Lac Ste. Anne, about fifty miles to the west of

(1) Palliser, Journal, p 72.

the fort,whence they are capable of hauling thirty thousand or forty thousand in a season; these are fine wholesome fish averaging four pounds weight each. Great quantities of provisions are traded here, it is the principal depot for provisions, as the several brigades of boats are mostly supplied from this place."(1) He was also struck by the lack of agricultural enterprise around the fort- "Little agriculture is carried on about Fort Edmonton owing partly to the want of acquaintance with even the leading principles of agriculture and principally from the disinclination of both men and women to work steadily at any agricultural occupation." (2)

October 7th, 1858, saw the arrival of a new Chief Factor in the person of Mr. William Christie, who came in advance of the returning brigade to take charge of Fort Edmonton. He had been stationed at Fort Pelly but was now promoted to the charge of the Saskatchewan district. (3) Mr. Christie had previously been at Edmonton in the capacity of chief trader under the regime of Factor William Sinclair in 1856 and had married Sinclair's daughter.

In preparation for spending the winter of 1859 at Fort Edmonton,Captain Palliser had,during the previous summer, arranged to provide fodder for his horses and soon after his arrival

(1) Palliser, Journal, p 116

(2) Ibid.,p 116

(3) Ibid., p 116

at the post proceeded to pay off his men, keeping only a sufficient number to care for the horses during the winter. In this connection Palliser wrote: "In order to pay them their wages, it was necessary for me to await the arrival of the boats up the Saskatchewan from Norway House , with the outfit I had ordered the year before.(1) All payments in this country being made in kind adds considerably to the trouble of paying wages which are first calculated in 'skins' and then paid in kind. The value of a 'skin' differs in different parts of the country: thus a 'skin' in Swan River district is 2/0 and, in the Upper Saskatchewan, it is about 2/3 .....

"Mr. Christie who understood the pricing and value of the articles very kindly undertook the payment of the men which is thus conducted:- Mr. Sullivan made out the account of wages due the men deducting advances, I then signed this and each man presented it to Mr. Christie who sat in my shop (2) in the fort surrounded by ready-made clothes, blankets, beds, axes, knives, files, kettles, tea, sugar,

(1) and (2)- Note: In the Introduction to the General Report to the British Government by Captain Palliser the following statement is to be found:- "Beyond the immediate neighborhood of Red River settlement no money of any coinage whatsoever is in use and all payments are made in kind; the men therefore had to be paid in such articles as coats, trousers, blankets, guns, ammunition, tea, tobacco, axes, knives, etc. and as the Hudson's Bay Company's store never contained a sufficiency of such goods for the purposes of their own trade, I organized a further supply(in anticipation of the payments at the end of each season to men employed by the Expedition.) These supplies were forwarded to me from Norway House up the Saskatchewan to Carleton in 1857 and to Edmonton in 1858, along with supplies of tea, sugar and flour for the use of the Expedition."
Palliser, Journals, Detailed Reports and Observations, p 19.

tobacco,etc. and the man kept taking what he wanted till Mr. Christie called out 'assez' upon which the account closed. Frequently,Mr. Christie would say 'Now, you have but half a skin left,' when his customer would immediately turn to the ribbons or beads for the equivalen of the difference.(1)

The Christmas celebration at the Fort came in for a brief mention by Captain Palliser. "At Christmas the festivities of the season were celebrated in imitation of the manners and customs of the Old Country. The Catholic missionaries from Lac Ste.Anne performed mass and Mr. Woolsey, the Methodist clergyman, conducted service in the principal room of the fort. "(2)

Daily life must have at times seemed monotonous to the small groups stationed at these far away outposts, where news from the outside world came so very infrequently. Visitors were a welcome addition to the gentlemen's mess room of the Fort. The winter spent by Palliser and Hector gave them an opportunity to get intimately acquainted with the daily routine of the post and there are many expressions in their journal of the kindly treatment they received at the hands of the factor and his men. Shortly after the turn of the year, 1859, Factor Christie organized a bit of diversion in what Dr. Hector terms a "pic-nic", instituted as a send-off to him on his setting out on a trip to Rocky Mountain House. Of this Hector wrote-

"I had with me Erasmus, Richards and a Company's voyageur named Louison. Each of us had a dog-train and as we were required

(1) Palliser, Journal, p 116ff.

(2) Ibid., p 117.

to take pemmican for twenty-eight days we were heavily loaded each sled having about three hundred and fifty pounds. It was beautiful weather, although cold, so Mr. Christie got up a party to go and camp the first night with me at the 'horse-guard' about twenty-five miles from the fort on the track I was to follow.

"They had two horse carioles and several dog-sleds with provisions for the pic-nic. As the track was hard we reached the 'horse-guard' in about four and a half hours and spent the afternoon visiting the horses; those belonging to the company and also to the expedition being kept at a place where there is fine feeding and shelter on the large tracts of prairies along the Sturgeon river. The horse-keeper gave up his log hut for our use and we passed a very merry evening.

"To show what a good train of dogs can do, provided they have a hardy and expert driver, I may mention the following circumstance: Mr. Christie found on arriving at the 'guard' that he had forgotten a letter he wished me to take to Jasper House. He at once sent back his clerk, Mr. Sinclair, with his dogs, although that gentleman had just driven them the twenty-five miles out to that place. Sinclair got to the fort before midnight and sent back a man with the same dogs who arrived with the letter for us before we were up in the morning, the dogs having thus run seventy-five miles in a good deal under the twenty-four hours.

"However, the Roman Catholic priest, M. Lacombe, has been frequently driven from his mission at Lac Ste. Anne to the Fort in his dog-cariole, a distance of fifty miles, after which his man, Alexis, one of the best runners in the country, has loaded the sled with four hundred pounds of meat and returned to the mission before next morning. "(1)

Apparently, under Mr. Christie's regime, conditions around the post began to improve. Dr. Hector, who had journeyed to Fort Pitt in March to attend a Hudson's Bay employee, ill with a fever, and had remained there some time, made the following comment on his return to Edmonton early in May ,1859: "Farming operations were now well advanced around the fort and it was with much interest that I heard Mr. Christie plan for improving this post and establishing agriculture on such a scale as to make the Company more independent of their half-breed employees who are such a thorn in the side of whoever has charge of this district."(2)

At this season all was bustle at the fort in preparation for th departure of the brigade on the annual trip to the outside. Dr. Hector also gave his impressions of life around the post at this time of year- "The fort was now very lively as all were busy preparing for the great annual voyage to the coast of Hudson's Bay which occupies t whole summer. Besides the brigade from Rocky Mountain House, Mr.

(1) Palliser, Journal, p 122.

(2) Ibid., p 132.

Fraser's brigade from Lesser Slave Lake and the Athabaska and Moberly's brigade from Jasper House both arrived; and the repacking of their furs, launching and loading of the boats and all the necessary preparation gave the inside of the fort an air of business and mercantile activity that looked more civilized than anything we had seen in the Saskatchewan. Outside the fort, however, the large motley encampments of Indians, voyageurs and Lac Ste. Anne half-breeds with all their women and children,dogs and horses at once destroyed the illusion. The lazy population still maintained that proportion usual in this country to the number of those that work." (1)

Both Captain Palliser and Dr. Hector seemed struck with the apparent lack of industry and the easy-going atmosphere about the Edmonton post, which would indicate a change from the strict discipline in the days of peppery Factor Rowand. The former in contrasting the post at Rocky Mountain House, which he had just visited,wrote:

"Here the business of the company is briskly conducted and work seems much more the order of the day than at Edmonton where the half-breeds in the service of the company appear very idle,lazy and impudent.

"The Chief Factor's work at this juncture is no sinecure. He has all the surrounding population condensed on his hands and just at the time when every scrap of food acquires a ten-fold value.

(1) Palliser, Journal, p 132ff

Those that start downstream have not only to carry food for themselves but also for the brigades to any other parts of the country while in the fort are to be left the women and children with perhaps only two or three men and if the buffalo are distant they will certainly suffer a summer of great privation. But the crews of the boats bring their families to loiter round the fort to see them off and great trouble and anxiety arises from endeavouring to escape feeding these and yet without offending the hot-tempered half-breed voyageurs who have generally received advances or are in debt to the company and would gladly seize any excuse for deserting."(1)

Finally, everything is in readiness. The Chief Factor has committeed the care of the fort to his subordinate, possibly the chief trader,or a relieving officer has arrived from Rocky Mountain House as has been customary, doubtless Mr. Brazeau. Mrs. Christie is taking the long journey with him this time. With many shouts of farewell and much waving they are off, the boats round the bend in the river and disappear from view and life at the fort slips back to its quiet and monotonous summer routine.

In this particular year food was very scarce and Chief Factor Christie, as he journeyed down the river, must have given many an anxious thought as to how they would carry on. Captain Palliser, who with Dr. Hector was still at the fort, made the following note

(1) Palliser, Journal, p 133

regarding the supply of food: "The scarcity of the provisions at Edmonton now became very serious; it was evident that we must all go to look for meat. I was in expectation of letters from the government with orders either to return home or continue the expedition. My party was,however, too large to be supported in the fort, where every ounce of provisions was of the last importance. Under these circumstances I had nothing for it but to make a start in search of food, leaving Dr. Hector at the fort to await the arrival of letters and orders from the Colonial Office." (1)

(1) Palliser, Journal, p 133

CHAPTER III

Edmonton in the 'Sixties

The isolation of Fort Edmonton was soon to be partly broken by the establishment of a Roman Catholic Mission by the Oblate Order on the Sturgeon River, about nine miles from the Fort in a north westerly direction. Its founding was due to the efforts of the French priest, Père Lacombe, who, from the time of his arrival in the West in 1852, had made his headquarters at the mission of his church at Lac Ste.Anne, fifty miles north west of Edmonton. This mission had been established to minister to the Crees and the place had been chosen because it was a large centre of Indian settlement and also for the important reason that it was far away from the trail which their enemies, the Blackfoot,used when they came to Edmonton to trade. From there the intrepid missionary had journeyed far out over the prairies, visiting the various Indian tribes and even penetrating into the Blackfoot country. He had won the confidence and good-will of the latter by his untiring and unselfish ministrations to the tribe,stricken, at the time of his visit in the winter of 1857, with an epidemic of scarlet fever which made great inroads on their numbers. Father Lacombe wished to establish a station from which he could with greater facility minister to the Blackfoot than from Lac Ste. Anne and there was also another reason for the setting up of an additional mission. The number of Métis showing a tendency to abandon their nomadic life, to settle about the mission and turn to farming was increasing and Father Lacombe was convinced that the soil around Ste. Anne with its numerous muskegs was not the most

promising for a farming community. The timely visit of Bishop Taché, on an inspection of the western missions in 1860, gave him the opportunity he desired. The priest persuaded the Bishop to look over the country with him. They journeyed around by dog train and snow-shoes, when "one day they reached a fine hill overlooking the Sturgeon valley where that pretty river winds on itself in many curves and Big Lake gleams in the distance. The Bishop paused and surveyed the landscape, then turning to Father Lacombe, he said- 'Mon Père, the site is indeed magnificent. I choose it for the new mission and I want it to be called St. Albert in honour of your patron'."(1) The Bishop then planted his staff in the snow where they stood saying-"Here you will build the chapel ",(2) and....."on the exact spot where the staff had been planted Father Lacombe later erected the altar of the mission chapel."(3) There it stands today, a stout structure of squared timber, looking very little the worse for wear after having braved the elements for so many years. It is now preserved as a historic relic by the authorities of the Oblate Order, who have had a brick outer covering and roof erected around it, and it is open to the visiting public on Sundays and holidays.

In the springtime of 1861, Father Lacombe set out from Lac Ste. Anne with ponies, oxen and farm implements for the location of the new mission, his faithful servants, the Normand couple, accompanying

(1) Hughes, Katherine, Father Lacombe, New York, 1914, p 82.
(2) Ibid, p 82
(3) Ibid. p 82

him. They pitched their tents on the hill, the spot chosen, and unpacked their household goods in their temporary home. Father Lacombe with some Métis helpers crossed the river to cut logs for the building, in the spruce forest on the opposite hill. The logs were hauled to the site and sawed. Simultaneously the soil was cleared and broken. "There was but one plough: Father Lacombe was anxious to cultivate as great an area as possible so he arranged that one man should plow part of the day with two oxen while another man with another yoke should plough late into the night. This was possible because of the long twilight in the Saskatchewan valley."(1) Soon, about twenty of the Ste. Anne Métis came to settle at St. Albert. It was a busy spring and summer. The men set to work to get out timber for houses and the women, under the direction of Père Lacombe,planted a large communal garden with carrots,onions,beets,cabbages,turnips and other vegetables. Late autumn saw a satisfactory harvest of vegetables stored for winter use. The grain was threshed and then taken into Fort Edmonton to be ground at the Hudson's Bay Company's grist mill.(2) Houses for about twenty families were erected--"They were quite seemly structures for the period and the place,having floors,doors and windows, as well as shingles on the roof,made by Father Lacombe and his zealous helpers."(3)

(1) Hughes,Katherine,Father Lacombe,New York,1914, p 84.
(2) Ibid. p 84ff
(3) Ibid. p 85

The growth of the new neighboring settlement was intimately bound up with the life of Fort Edmonton. Father Lacombe went to the fort every alternate Sunday to celebrate mass and on more than one occasion the missionary's influence among the Indians, especially the Blackfoot, was sought by the Factor, when their warlike attitude threatened the post. Every time Father Lacombe went to the fort in pursuance of his religious duties the Sturgeon river had to be crossed. In the summer of 1861, he constructed a small scow which he used as a ferry, swimming his pony across, but the spring of 1862 saw the river so greatly swollen that the crossing was extremely difficult. Said Father Lacombe, "I grew tired of that, I say to myself one day I'll make a bridge. Next Sunday after mass I went outside and called aloud, my friends, I'm finished to cross that way in water walking in the mud on the bank and pushing the scow. I'll build me a bridge and if any of you do not help me- that man will not cross on the bridge, he will go through the water. Yes, I will have a man there to watch."(1) The threat had its effect: the whole settlement turned out and in three days a good solid bridge was constructed. The pleasure of the residents knew no bounds. "Like children they crossed and recrossed it scores of times at first simply for the delight and novelty of it."(2) It and the mission were evidently considered one of the "sights" as all visitors to the Fort went out

(1) Hughes, Katherine, Father Lacombe New York, 1914 p 86ff.

(2) Ibid., p 87.

[illegible]

to view the settlement. Lord Milton and Dr. Cheadle, visitors to Edmonton in 1863, mentioned it as the first and only bridge they had seen in the west and for a long time it was spoken of on the Saskatchewan as "The Bridge". (1)

Having made satisfactory progress with his mission, Père Lacombe visited St. Boniface in the summer of 1862 to report to his Bishop and on his return in August he was accompanied by an Oblate novice, Brother Scollen, whom he had brought to teach the three R's to the children at the Fort. "This school,- the first regular school to be opened west of Manitoba- was held in a log house within the Fort and there were twenty pupils, the children of the Company's clerks and servants." (2)

It was in the summer of 1862 that the occasional prospector travelled via Edmonton to the Cariboo gold fields. Reports of rich strikes there had been a signal to gold-seekers from far and near. California had been the centre of the gold activity during the '50's and when its peak had passed the seekers after the elusive treasure spread into British Columbia, Idaho and Montana. The Cariboo country was in the heyday of its activities in the '60's. Edmonton was visited by the first party to cross from Canada to British Columbia overland. The composite group numbered one hundred and fifty, mostly from Ontario and Quebec, and their journey by the time they

(1) Milton, Viscount, and Dr.W.B.Cheadle, The North-West Passage by Land, London, 1901, 9th Edition (1st edition 1865), p 180.

(2) Hughes, Katherine, Father Lacombe, New York, 1914, p 88.

reached Edmonton had taken five and a half months. Several of the party kept diaries in which were recorded in a more or less detailed fashion the story of their adventurous trip. An account of the travels of one group, the McNaughton party, was afterwards set down in book form by the wife of one of the pioneers. From this we get a description of her party's arrival at the Fort and the reception accorded them. Edmonton was reached on July 21st, 1862, and the travellers "encamped on a grassy slope within full view of the Fort and remained there for a few days until a boat could be procured to ferry them across: all the Hudson's Bay Company's boats had been swept away by the late floods."(1) The customary salute was fired from a cannon in their honour as they approached the Fort. Mention is made of the hospitable reception accorded them- "At Fort Edmonton the travellers received every mark of kindness from Mr. Brazeau , who was in charge, and in acknowledgment gave a course of three concerts. The performers were dressed to represent as nearly as possible a troupe of negro minstrels. Some of them possessed finely trained voices and the concerts seemed much appreciated." (2)

Members of this group went out to St. Albert and traded a good deal there with the settlers. A great number of their carts were

(1) McNaughton,Margaret, Overland to Cariboo, Toronto, 1896, p 55

(2) Ibid., p 56ff.

sold and oxen exchanged for pack horses which were the only suitable means by which to traverse the trails beyond Edmonton to the Rocky Mountains.

Like earlier visitors,these travellers commented on the dearth of much agricultural activity- "We were exceedingly surprised that only a small portion of land was cultivated either by the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Edmonton or at St. Albert and especially as the settlers seemed to set so high a value upon flour. Little attention was given to agriculture although the soil was most fertile and the climate well adapted for the growing of wheat."(1)

The strangers described the Saskatchewan valley as beautiful beyond description. They noted the many evidences of coal in the district and with an eye ever alert for the precious metal some of them tried their hand at placer mining on the Saskatchewan River with such promising results that fourteen men remained behind at Fort Edmonton to prospect and did not reach British Columbia until the following year.(2)

The party were pleased at the kindness received from the officials of the Fort,especially at the hospitality offered them by Mr. Colin Fraser who "entertained them in his own house,loaned them fishing tackle, books,etc. and,being a true Highlander,played the bagpipes for them in the evening. Mr. Fraser had two fine-looking

(1) McNaughton,Margaret,Overland to Cariboo, Toronto, 1896, p 57ff.

(2) Ibid., p 59.

daughters but they were as shy as young fawns and could only speak the Cree language."(1)

After completing their outfit,buying provisions and obtaining a guide ,the "Overlanders" prepared for their departure,electing, after consultation with Mr. Brazeau and others conversant with the country, to reach the Cariboo via the Yellowhead Pass. They attended a religious service at the Fort, conducted by the Reverend Thomas Woolsey, Wesleyan missionary, on Sunday morning, July 27th,1862, and took their departure two days later.(2) The party found travelling difficult between Edmonton and the mission at Lac Ste. Anne and with regard to the latter made the following comment: "The half-breeds restricted their agricultural labours to the cultivation of small patches of potatoes. They seemed to spend the long summer in singing and sleeping until the commencement of the hunting season, when they deserted the village to enjoy the recreation of slaughtering the buffalo."(3)

The Reverend George McDougall ,the Chairman of the Saskatchewan District of the Methodist church,accompanied by his young son,John, made his first trip through the West from Norway House,in the summer of 1862. His main object was to visit the missions of his church

(1) McNaughton, Margaret,Overland to Cariboo, Toronto, 1896, p 64.

(2) Ibid. p 59.

(3) Ibid. p 60ff.

established at the Indian fishing grounds on Whitefish and Smoking Lakes and also the Indians on the plains. This being accomplished,on his return journey he made a brief stop at Fort Edmonton, late in the month of August of that year. This, his first visit, was followed by many others until he came up to settle at Edmonton and found a Methodist mission in 1871. The post as seen through the eyes of the missionary and his son was described as - "The chief place of interest in the great country known as the Saskatchewan valley .....but as yet there was no settlement, it consisted of the Hudson's Bay fort and that was all in the vicinity. Out north about nine miles was a newly commenced Roman Catholic mission but here the four walls of the fort enclosed everything. Stores and dwelling houses were packed in a small space and when the trip-men and voyageurs were home for the winter the post would be crowded. (1)

"I had now seen three Hudson's Bay Company's forts in the Saskatchewan - Carleton, Pitt and Edmonton - all situated in one of the richest agricultural districts in Canada but each and all striking evidence that the Hudson's Bay Company was nothing more than a fur-trading organization ; they were not settlers nor farmers. Pelts and not bread,furs and not homes were what they aimed at." (2)

"The people who inhabited the country were nomadic. Hunting, trapping,fishing were their means of livelihood and in all this they

(1) McDougall,John, Forest,Lake and Prairie, Twenty Years of Pioneer Life in Western Canada, 1842-1862, Toronto, 1895, p 221.

(2) Ibid. p 221.

were encouraged by the great company to whom belonged the various trading posts scattered over the wide area and of which Fort Edmonton was chief.

"For the collecting and shipping of furs Edmonton existed. For this one definite purpose that post lived and stood and had its being..... ..... Thirteen different peoples ,speaking eight distinct languages made this post their periodic centre; and while at Edmonton was shown the wonderful tact and skill of the Hudson's Bay Company in managing contending tribes,yet nevertheless many a frightful massacre took place under the shadow of its walls."(1)

The winter of 1862-63 proved to be an exceedingly hard one for the Edmonton district. For several months the Indians and some of the traders were in a state of semi-starvation. The Crees and Blackfoot even declared a truce, needing all their time and energies for the hunt to obtain food. Towards the end of the winter,even at Fort Edmonton, where usually there were adequate supplies,rations were very low. Through the providence of Père Lacombe the mission colony at St. Albert was a little more fortunate. The fare there was eked out from the store of vegetables and grain from the mission farm and fish that had been dried in the autumn.

A description of a Christmas spent at Fort Edmonton in 1862,when he was a young man of nineteen,is to be had from the pen of the Reverend John McDougall: "I had brought the Reverend Thomas Woolsey from north of Smoking Lake to the Fort, he being the

(1) McDougall,John, Saddle,Sled and Snow-Shoe, Pioneering on the Saskatchewan in the Sixties, Toronto, 1896 , p 12.

chaplain of the Hudson's Bay Company at the time and as it was the custom for postmasters and traders from inland and distant posts to convene during the winter holidays, it was the place of the chaplain to come also. We had come by dog-train and because of lack of snow had kept to the ice of the Saskatchewan right up to the Fort. We were received very kindly by all parties and I very soon felt at home with such men as Mr. Richard Hardisty and Mr. Macdonald and in the family of Mr. Flett,where I received great hospitality and from being a total stranger was soon made to feel thoroughly intimate. The times were hard. Provisions were scarce. Buffalo meat either fresh or in dried meat or pemmican form was at a high premium and Mr. Christie, the gentleman in charge, anxious as to the future. We arrived the day before Christmas and left the day after the New Year. Dogs and men were on short rations. Nevertheless,we enjoyed the brief intercourse with our fellow-men."(1)

What enjoyment they must have had these roughly clad, weather-beaten visaged men, isolated for the most of the year from social intercourse,particularly at the small posts,save for occasions such as these,sitting around the blazing log fire,pipes puffing vigorously and exchanging tales of their various experiences. There were doubtless many stories of hair-raising excitement, of hardships

(1) McDougall,Rev. John,letter in an undated clipping from the Edmonton Bulletin.

The same facts are also to be found in Forest,Lake and Prairie,Twenty Years of Frontier Life in Western Canada 1842-62, Rev. John McDougall, Toronto, 1895, p 255ff.

endured,also wit and sallies at the expense of their brothers in the service and much boasting of accomplishment in which their dogs figured prominently. According to Mr. McDougall- "Dogs were the main means of winter transport and were therefore tremendously in evidence. I fully believe that if there was one dog in the small compass of the fort at Edmonton there were one hundred and fifty. When the bell rang for the men to go to work or come for their rations, the dogs would howl and one would imagine bedlam let loose. Then the fights which were taking place at all hours,day or night, became monotonous. A man's speed and endurance and ability to get long miles per day out of a train of dogs gave him a place and a dignity in Fort Edmonton in 1862."(1)

On this particular festive season mentioned by Reverend Mr. McDougall- "Mr. Woolsey held services on Christmas day and on Sunday. On Christmas and all day on New Year's such sports as foot-races, foot-ball and tug-of-war were enjoyed and on New Year's night there was a grand ball in the ball-room of 'the Big House', which then occupied the centre of the old fort..... the officers of the company at Edmonton were: Chief Factor,William Christie, and Chief Trader, Richard Hardisty; as postmasters there were Messrs. Flett,Brazeau and Cunningham; as clerks there were McCauley and McDonald and in charge of rations, time and work of the fort there was Malcolm Groat. Of those who came in for the holidays there were Colin Fraser from Lac St. Anne,

(1) McDougall,Rev. John,letter in an undated clipping from the Edmonton Bulletin.

The same facts are also to be found in "Forest, Lake and Prairie,Twenty Years of Frontier Life in Western Canada,1842-62,by Rev. John McDougall, Toronto, 1895,p 255ff.

Peter Pambrun from Lac la Biche and Mr. Chantalan from Fort Pitt and also William Calder from Fort Assiniboine."(1)

This was the first but by no means the last Christmas that the Wesleyan missionary, John McDougall, spent at the Fort. He enjoyed its hospitality again in 1863 and several times in the ensuing years when he was stationed at the Pigeon Lake and Victoria missions.

The summer of 1863 saw the arrival at Fort Edmonton of two noted travellers,Dr. William Butler Cheadle, London,England, and Viscount Milton, who have been referred to as the first transcontinental tourists. Their main purpose in crossing the continent was to discover the most direct route through British territory to the gold regions of the Cariboo, the reports of the rich finds in which district were causing such a stir in the outside world, and also to explore the western flank of the Rocky Mountains. They had travelled by railroad to St. Paul,Minnesota, then a five hundred mile canoe trip to Fort Garry and thence to Edmonton. Their diary,kept en route, gives some interesting pictures of their short stay at the Edmonton post.

The two Englishmen had wintered near Fort Carleton and in the spring proceeded to Edmonton,arriving there May 14th,1863. They were hospitably received by Mr. Hardisty,the Chief Trader,who was in charge during the absence of Mr. Christie on his annual trip. Dr. Cheadle

(1) McDougall,Rev. John,letter in an undated clipping of the Edmonton Bulletin.

The same facts are also to be found in "Forest,Lake and Prairie,Twenty Years of Pioneer Life in Western Canada,1842-1862" by John McDougall, Toronto,1895, p 221.

had already made the acquaintance of Mr. Hardisty the previous winter on the occasion of a hurried trip to Fort Carleton to replenish his food supplies. His journal entry of January 24th,1863,makes mention of this- "In the evening the Edmonton packet arrived. Mr. Hardisty in charge. He came in a cariole with a very fine train of dogs,harness set out with bells and plumes, very jolly; a yellow-haired Scotchman he, by descent, a Red River man born and bred, very pleasant fellow indeed and very obliging."(1)

Edmonton and district appeared to them as a land of kindly soil, a rich beautiful land of promise,and the following description of it was recorded in their journal: "The establishment at Edmonton is the most important one in the Saskatchewan district and is the residence of a chief factor, who has charge of all the minor posts. It boasts of a windmill, a blacksmith's forge and a carpenter's shop. The boats required for the annual voyage to York Factory in Hudson's Bay are built and mended here; carts,sleighs and harness made, and all appliances required for the Company's traffic between the different posts. Wheat grows luxuriantly and potatoes and other roots flourish as wonderfully here as elsewhere on the Saskatchewan. There are about thirty families living at the Fort engaged in the service of the Company and a large body of hunters are constantly employed in supplying the establishment with meat."(2

As the travellers had to spend some time waiting for horses and guides to continue their journey through the mountains,

(1) Doughty,A.G. and Lanctot,G.,ed. Cheadle's Journal of a Trip Across Canada,1862-1863, Ottawa,1931, p 106.

(2) Milton,Viscount,and Cheadle,W.B.,The North-West Passage by Land, London, 1901, 9th edition, p 179

they whiled away their time looking for gold on the river and visiting the mission of St. Albert. With regard to the former they made the ensuing observation--"In the afternoon we went across the river to wash gold. Hardisty and Baptiste accompanied us: worked away at our tin pans, obtaining a perceptible quantity each time."(1) Their visit to St. Albert was described in considerable detail.

"At Lake St. Albert's, about nine miles north of the Fort, a colony of freemen i.e. half-breeds who had left the service of the Company have formed a small settlement which is presided over by a Romish priest. Some forty miles beyond is the ancient colony of Lac Ste. Anne of similar character with more numerous inhabitants.

"Soon after our arrival, Mr. Hardisty informed us that five grizzly bears had attacked a band of horses belonging to the priest of St. Albert and afterwards pursued two men who were on horseback, one of whom being badly mounted narrowly escaped by the stratagem of throwing down his coat and cap which the bears stopped to tear to pieces. The priest had arranged to have a grand hunt on the morrow and we resolved to join the sport. We carefully prepared guns and revolvers and at daylight next morning drove out with Baptiste to St. Albert. We found a little colony of some twenty houses built on the rising ground near a small lake and river. A substantial wooden bridge spanned the latter, the only structure of the kind we had seen in the Hudson's Bay

(1) Doughty, A.G. and Lanctot, G., ed. Cheadle's Journal of a Trip Across Canada, 1862-1863, Ottawa, 1931, p 144.

territory. The priest's house was a pretty white building with garden around it and adjoining it a chapel,school and nunnery. The worthy Father Lacombe was standing in front of his dwelling as we came up and we at once introduced ourselves and enquired about the projected bear hunt. He welcomed us cordially and informed us that no day had yet been fixed but that he intended to preach a crusade against the marauders on the following Sunday,when a time should be appointed for the half-breeds to assemble for the hunt.

"Père Lacombe was an exceedingly intelligent man and we found his society very agreeable. Although a French-Canadian ,he spoke English very fluently and his knowledge of the Cree language was acknowledged by the half-breeds to be superior to their own. Gladly accepting his invitation to stay and dine we followed him into his house which contained only a single room with a sleeping loft above. The furniture consisted of a small table and a couple of rough chairs, the walls were adorned with several coloured prints, amongst which were a portrait of His Holiness the Pope, another of the Bishop of Red River (1) and a picture representing some very substantial and solid looking angels lifting very jolly saints out of the flames of purgatory.

"After a capital dinner of soup,fish and dried meat with delicious vegetables we started around the settlement in company with our host. He showed us very respectable farms with rich corn-fields,large bands of horses and herds of cattle. He had devoted himself to improving the condition of his flock, had brought out

(1) Alexander Antonin Taché was a missionary to the Red River from 1845 to 1851. At the latter date he became coadjutor Bishop of St. Boniface and in 1853 the second Bishop of St. Boniface. This post he held until his elevation to the Archbishopric in 1871.

at great expense ploughs and other farming implements for their own use and was at present completing a corn-mill to be worked by horse-power. He had built a chapel and established schools for half-breed children. The substantial bridge we had crossed was the result of his exertions. Altogether this little settlement was the most flourishing community we had seen since leaving Red River."(1)

The mill in question had been brought across the plains from St. Boniface by Père Lacombe in his first train of Red River carts. The stark want that had threatened the settlement in the winter of 1862 had caused the good missionary to make up his mind to provide his mission with a continuous supply of food and so prevent a recurrence of such a state of things in the future. To stimulate the none too industrious Métis he offered prizes for the planting of a large crop and the result was gratifying. The erection of this the first horse-power mill on the western plains caused Père Lacombe considerable trouble. His mechanical knowledge was very limited, but with the assistance of an American who had wintered at the mission and who also knew little about the assembling of machinery the task was accomplished. Then came the problem of providing horse-power. The wild Indian ponies strongly resisted being yoked to the mill but the determination of Father Lacombe won the day. He wrote to a benefactor in Quebec- "Having neither blacksmiths, nor iron, nor implements, the supply of power for our invention was often interrupted .....however ,we at last made flour to the great

(1) Milton and Cheadle,The North-West Passage by Land,London,1901, p 180ff.

admiration of our people."(1)

In connection with the bridge across the Sturgeon,which had given the St. Albert community such satisfaction and which had elicited praise from Lord Milton and Dr. Cheadle, the story is told that this same structure evoked the ire of Governor Dallas of the Hudson's Bay Company, who on his way back from Oregon visited Fort Edmonton in August,1863, and was driven by the Factor out to the Mission. To him the bridge signified the intrusion of another force- the pioneer settler- into the land where the Great Company of Gentlemen Adventurers held undisputed sway. If the Company wished bridges on the many streams and rivers of its territory ,it could build them,he is reported to have curtly told Factor Christie in ordering him to see that it was removed. The wrathy Governor in due course departed, Factor Christie promptly forgot the incident and the bridge remained.

In the same year, 1863, Father Lacombe notes that on his occasional visits to Fort Edmonton it had a greatly improved appearance under Factor William Christie. "A house and chapel built for Father Lacombe stood just west of the Big House. This was undoubtedly intended not only to please the priest but to provide the fort as well with a lightning-rod against the wrath of the Blackfoot."(2)

(1) Hughes,Katherine,Father Lacombe, New York,1914, p 91.

(2) Ibid., p 98.

In 1864 the Blackfoot threatened the peace of Fort Edmonton. A party of several hundred had come to trade and made camp for a few days. The hill behind the fort was covered with tepees. When the trading was finished, the lodges were pulled down and the band in marching order on their ponies, with their possessions lashed to the travois which dragged behind, filed down the steep path to the river, which at this particular season was low enough to ford. The river had been crossed and the band was straggling up the steep wooded banks on the south side. The trouble happened thus- A Sarcee, a member of the band, engaged in a horse deal, when the start was made, was loath to leave until he had gained his objective. The matter was being argued beside the Indian Gate, near the southeast bastion. The men engaged in the trade were Flatboat McLaine, Joe McDonald and another man.
A bundle of old clothes and a quantity of alcohol in an old painkiller bottle was being offered for the Indian's horse and to their persuasive eloquence were added offers to let the Indian smell the alcohol . A horse in those days was worth fifty to sixty skins and the Indian's business acumen led him to hold out for more. Suddenly, a group of Cree warriors crept around the bastion from the south side and their leader shot the Sarcee in the thigh. The Sarcee, badly wounded, fell. McLaine dragged the body through the south-eastern gate, while the Crees rather alarmed made off. The Sarcee's squaw

was also pulled into the Fort the gates of which were shut by the Steward, Malcolm Groat. Father Lacombe, who was sitting in his quarters writing, hurried to the scene. The Indian's wounds were dressed and he was handed over to the care of Steward Groat, who put him to bed. A few days after the Sarcee died and was buried under the trees in the burying ground of the Fort. The squaw was consoled with numerous gifts and sent back to her own people. Some time after, a war party of Blackfoot appeared at the Fort . Mr. Brazeau,who was well known among the Blackfoot and whose fearlessness they respected,met them at a considerable distance from the gates and led them into the Indian Hall. There, Factor Christie and Father Lacombe talked with them, smoked the calumet, and,having succeeded in pacifying them,sent them off laden with gifts.

Father Lacombe spent Christmas of 1865 at Fort Edmonton and through the medium of Miss Hughes's book we get his description of the Gentlemen's Mess-room of the Big House, where the dinner on Christmas eve was served- "It was a fine room, noted alike for spaciousness and hospitality. Everyone who visited Edmonton House from Paul Kane's time onward recorded its rugged pretentiousness. There was nothing finer in the West except the old Council Room of Norway House.

"Time for this isolated kingdom was regulated by the great clock which hung on the mess-room wall. Pictures hung there too, good pictures and swords from the Old Land and buffalo horns and moose heads from the plains and forests of the New. There was a cavernous

fireplace and heavy mantel about which for close on to fifty years the gentlemen of Edmonton House had lingered in chat after dinner. At one side was a table laden with brass candle-sticks which Murdoch Mackenzie, the cook from 'bonny Stornaway' kept in polished array to light the dinner table each night. Two immense heaters brought from England by way of Hudson's Bay were required to heat the room.

"At midnight the bell pealed Yuletide greetings and almost everyone in the Fort came together in the church. The congregation listened there to the story of the Child King told in English, French and Cree." (1)

Again in the course of time the progress of events threatened Edmonton's prestige. From the very early days the line of communication of the Hudson's Bay Company from London was through Hudson's Bay by way of York Factory and Norway House and thence up the North Saskatchewan river. Edmonton had long been the head of navigation and the chief centre of the Saskatchewan district for the accumulation of furs and for the distribution of supplies. The highway of trade had been solely by waterway. In the late'50's and early'60's a change took place. Railways

(1) Hughes,Katherine,Father Lacombe, New York,1914, p 126ff.

had gradually penetrated north-westerly to St. Paul and the Hudson's Bay Company opened up a trade route by ox-cart between that point and the Red River settlement. Fort Garry then superseded Norway House as the distributing centre for the Company and became the base for goods imported from the United States and Canada. Trade grew rapidly between Fort Garry and St. Paul and at one time the Company had nearly fifteen hundred freight-laden carts on the route. From Fort Garry supplies began to go out over the plains and a system of transportation by land was established, the cart-trail competing with the water highway. Father Lacombe was the pioneer in this method of freighting for Alberta. He brought the first train of Red River carts to St. Albert in 1862. As his mission had progressed,Father Lacombe had found that it was necessary to have adequate supplies on hand for its needs and as the Indians and Métis were paid in goods to the value of one beaver skin a day, it became a decided drain on the mission's resources to meet the high freight rates of the Hudson's Bay Company, the only medium through which freight was brought into the country. The missionary decided to bring in his own freight and it was while on a visit to St. Boniface to report progress to his bishop that he organized the first brigade of Red River carts to cross the prairies with freight from the Red River to Edmonton. It was not until five years later that the Hudson's Bay Company followed suit and made the memorable change in their method of transportation

of supplies across the prairies making Fort Garry their distributing centre instead of Norway House. Father Lacombe told of seeing, while at St. Paul des Cris in August,1867, the first brigade of Hudson's Bay Company's carts, eighty-two in number, crossing the plains. This large cavalcade of carts took two days in passing and was a source of admiration and wonder to the astonished natives.(1) This change in the system of transportation was quite revolutionary in so far as Edmonton was concerned. Its importance as the head of river navigation and as a district distributing centre suffered in consequence. For a while,the change threatened to make Edmonton a distant outpost,the post at Carleton gaining in prestige at its expense. Furs and buffalo robes could just as easily be collected at this post which was nearer to Fort Garry,thus lessening the cost of freight by the shorter haul.(2)

In another way trade was drawn away from Edmonton. Fort Garry and St. Paul had a more westerly rival in Fort Benton on the Missouri. Steamboat navigation up the Missouri from St. Louis had at that date made of Fort Benton in Montana an important base of trade. From this centre outposts were established in what is now southern Alberta and traders in carts

(1) Hughes,Katherine, Father Lacombe, New York,1914, p 137ff.

(2) Oliver,Hon. Frank,article in Queen's Quarterly,Winter,1930, p 89.

began to establish connection with the Blackfoot. These Indians who in the past had penetrated the country of their enemies, the Crees, to trade at Fort Edmonton, and whose coming was the occasion for many acts of violence, turned their faces in another direction and in the '60's went to trade at the American posts with the powerful trading concern, I. G. Baker and Company.

The contributing factors which robbed Edmonton of its prestige were the greatly diminished importance of water transport due to the establishment of an effective system of transportation by land and the establishment of a rival base of trade at Fort Benton in Montana. "The tide of progress seemed to have turned as definitely against Edmonton in the early'60's as when it had been abandoned in 1811."(1) The population of the native settlements around Edmonton began to diminish; many settlers moved away to the east. Batoche, after whom the Crossing was named ,and Gabriel Dumont,afterwards the rebel leader in the rebellion of '85,were among those who left the district. But while various changes in the methods and lines of transportation and in volume of trade had an adverse influence on the Edmonton settlement, it was to receive succor in the way of an influx of settlers from another direction. (2)

(1) Oliver, Hon. Frank,article in Queen's Quarterly, Winter 1930, p 90.

(2) Ibid.

The California gold strike in 1849 opened up the region between the Rockies and the Pacific. Thousands from all walks of life rushed to the gold diggings, braving hardship, exposure and death to seek elusive fortune. During the '50's attention was concentrated on the possibilities of California but as this gold field gradually became worked out the gold seekers spread into the region of British Columbia and as far north as Alaska. The Cariboo country proved to be the scene of very rich diggings in the early '60's. Its streams and valleys were avidly explored in the effort to make it disclose its hidden treasure. When the peak of production was passed and results diminished steadily, the restless army of prospectors scattered in the search for other fields. Many found their way over the mountains to the Edmonton settlement. The year 1864 was one of great excitement in the Edmonton district. Among those who came from the Cariboo country was a miner named Tom Clover. He struck gold on a bar in the Saskatchewan river in 1864, about ten miles below Edmonton, where the Canadian National Railway bridge now crosses the North Saskatchewan. The bar on which he worked retained his name which also was given afterwards to the agricultural district on the south side of the river, running back from where the bar was situated. His discovery was the signal for a rush to the new diggings at Edmonton and for a number of seasons over fifty miners worked in the gold-bearing stretches of the river, which extended from a point fifty miles above to fifty miles below Edmonton.

Early in the year 1870, just before the ice broke, Fort Edmonton was again threatened by a band of Blackfoot. It was a party bent on revenge for an attack by some Cree-Stonies a short time before on a group of their people who had come to trade. The Blackfoot trading party on approaching the Fort found encamped about it some one hundred and fifty of their enemies, Crees and Stonies. This group eagerly seized the opportunity for avenging the death of their chief, Maskepetoon, who had been treacherously killed by the Blackfoot a short time before. Seeing trouble brewing, the Hudson's Bay Company made every effort to protect the lives of the Blackfoot by giving the Crees a large quantity of goods and provisions to allow them to go unmolested. The Factor even got some half-breeds from St. Albert to act as guards to the Blackfoot to ensure their safe departure. Not an enemy was in sight when the band, with accompanying guard, started from the Fort, crossed the ice of the river and proceeded up the hill on the south side. Suddenly, a group of Crees and Stonies in war regalia rushed upon them from their hiding place in the shelter of the thick bushes. The half-breed guards stepped aside as the Crees fired on the fleeing Blackfoot. Four men, three women and a child were shot down and the rest, despoiled of all their possessions, escaped with their wounded and made their way back to their own country after much hardship, there to nurse their wrath and to prepare for revenge in time. The dead Blackfoot both men and women were scalped and horribly mutilated and the triumphant Crees and Stonies held a grand scalp dance which

lasted over two days and nights.

A large party of Blackfoot was soon en route for Edmonton bent on revenge. They arrived on the south bank just before sunset. A band of Crees,employed at the Fort cutting cordwood, first gave the alarm. After warning Factor Christie, they hurriedly visited their tepees near-by and decorated themselves with their war paint.

A few minutes before the Blackfoot were sighted,Mr. David McDougall and the Hudson's Bay Company's trader, William Rowland, who were on their way to Victoria, had arrived at the south bank from Pigeon Lake with their winter's trade of furs. The Reverend Peter Campbell was also of the party. "The ice in the river was rotten and had 'shored' leaving a narrow channel across the river. Mr. McDougall saved most of his furs by taking them across in a skiff. The Hudson's Bay man was not so fortunate. He was hurriedly brought over by Malcolm Groat but had to abandon his cartloads of furs.It was touch and go with all parties. The Blackfoot fired volley after volley at the skiff but luckily hit no one and also continued firing while the traders were climbing the steep banks before the fort gates, using their best packs of furs as shields. The bullets came fast and furious but as the guns were inferior and the distance considerable no one was hurt. At the fort all was confusion. The frightened Indians struck their tents and fled within its walls."(1)

(1) Oliver, Hon. Frank, article in the Edmonton Bulletin, November 7th,1904, and also from "In the Days of the Red River Rebellion, Life and Adventure in the Far West of Canada, 1868-72, John McDougall, p 119ff

Everyone was ordered within the palisade by Factor Christie and the gates were closed, locked and barricaded. Great excitement prevailed: all believed the Blackfoot would cross the river. The cannon in the bastion were got in readiness and arms and ammunition dealt out to all.

A humorous incident occurred which for the moment relieved the tense excitement of the little garrison. Factor Christie,as was customary when parleying with a band of Indians, hurriedly donned his ceremonial dress, sword-belt and sword. There had not been occasion to wear it for some time and in the meantime the Factor has so gained in weight that the belt would not meet. "Malcolm Groat and Harrison Young came to his aid in girding his solid form with the outgrown belt and the pinching and pressing process was rich in mirth for the onlookers."(1)

The Blackfoot,seven hundred strong, hid themselves along the heavily wooded south bank. From this ambush they kept up a desultory firing upon the fort. The occasional bullet whizzed over the stockade but did no damage at such a long range. A messenger was sent off in hot haste to the St. Albert mission to enlist the aid of Father Lacombe and his Métis. Night fell and with it the anxiety at the fort increased: it was expected that the Blackfoot would cross and attack the fort under cover of the darkness. Just after midnight,

(1) Hughes,Katherine, Father Lacombe,New York,1914, p 178.

Father Lacombe and thirty armed Métis came in along the St. Albert trail at a gallop. They were admitted through the rear gate and the Métis hastily despatched to the bastions to reinforce the handful of the Company's men,already there. The Blackfoot had ceased firing for some time and it was feared that they would swim across the river and, according to their usual method of attacking a fort, creep up through the low brushwood and set fire to the stockade.

Meanwhile,the attackingparty,having failed to surprise the fort and finding that the post was prepared for resistence,"turned their attention to the carts left by the traders,which were full of goods,leather and furs and provisions. Here was a genuine windfall to the warriors:clothing and blankets, prints and shirts, and all manner of good articles as well as pemmican,dried meat and tea. Settling down beside these good things they spent the night,every now and then firing a fresh fusilade at the fort but doing no harm. They made a bonfire of the carts and divided the spoils and kept up a racket all night."(1)

Father Lacombe,in spite of the order for all to remain within the stockade, went boldly outside to the brow of the bank and around the fort calling out in the Blackfoot language that he,

(1) McDougall,John, In the Days of the Red River Rebellion,Life and Adventure in the Far West of Canada,1868-72, Toronto, 1911 ,p 120.

Arsous-Kitsi-rarpi,(1) who was their friend and had been welcomed in the camps of their people,was now at the fort. He assured them that the Company and all the white men were their friends and were angry at the Crees for attacking them. He begged them to stop firing and go home.

The story is related that, while the priest was thus engaged, a new clerk,lately come to the fort, to whom the priest therefore was unknown,hearing the shouts in Blackfoot,was on the point of firing, when Malcolm Groat hastily intervened assuring him it was Father Lacombe's voice.

No response came to Father Lacombe's exhortations. The little band in the fort waited in silent anxiety. The hours wore on and when dawn came it was found that the priest's plea had had some influence. The avenging party had quietly withdrawn,laden with the furs and goods left by the traders.

But the inmates of the fort did not at once resume their daily routine with a sense of peace and security. They could not be quite sure whether the Blackfoot had really departed or were watching in the woods and looking for a place to cross. Guards were kept in the bastions for a couple of weeks. Occasional alarms were brought in by some Indian or half-breed,which caused a momentary panic but

(1) The Blackfoot's name for the priest which signifies--The Man with the Good Heart.

which investigation showed to have no foundation. Gradually, when nothing untoward occurred,life around the fort resumed its accustomed groove and the Blackfoot were forgotten.

CHAPTER IV

The End of the Company's Power and the Beginnings of Settlement

In the year 1869 a memorable change took place in the administration of the vast territory of the North-West. It marked the end of the Hudson's Bay Company's regime and the beginning of a new era. In that year, the rights of the Ancient and Honourable Company of Gentlemen Adventurers Trading into Hudson's Bay, given by royal charter in 1670, to that portion of the North-West known as Prince Rupert's Land were surrendered to the British Government, which in turn transferred them to the newly federated Government of the Dominion of Canada. For two hundred years the Company had been absolute lords and proprietors of this vast territory but under its rule very little settlement and very little development had taken place. On the other hand, south of the forty-ninth parallel growth had been very rapid. The government of Canada realized that ,if the North-West remained in the hands of the Company and with its development paralysed,there was grave danger that the United States might penetrate and acquire the country and Canada's future would be jeopardized. It was therefore

recognized that Canada's future depended on the acquiring of Rupert's Land and the bringing of British Columbia into the Confederation just formed in the east, which would give Canada an outlet to the Pacific.

Negotiations had been under way for some time and the Hudson's Bay Company had recognized that the cession of its territory to Canada was inevitable. In 1868, the British Parliament passed the Rupert's Land Act which gave the Dominion of Canada the right to accept the surrender of the territory in question together with all the territorial and other rights conveyed by the original charter to the Company. A memorandum of agreement was signed by officials of the Company and by delegates appointed by the government of Canada, and approved by the Dominion government in May, 1869.

By the terms of the surrender the Company was to receive £300,000 sterling. In addition, it was allowed to select one twentieth of the land in the "Fertile Belt", roughly, the region south of the north bank of the Saskatchewan River. The Company was to keep all its trading posts and was entitled to retain around each areas or parcels of land which, however, were not to aggregate more than

fifty thousand acres. It was under this clause that the Company chose three thousand acres surrounding Fort Edmonton constituting the local Hudson's Bay reserve. The Company was also to have the privilege of carrying on trade in its private corporate capacity without hindrance.

The Privy Council of Great Britain ordered that the transfer should go into effect on July 15th, 1870. Prince Rupert's Land then formally passed from the jurisdiction of the Hudson's Bay Company to that of the Dominion of Canada and a temporary provision was made for its administration by a council appointed by the Governor-in-Council. The newly acquired area subsequently became known as the North-West Territories.

One of the most serious problems with which the new Canadian government found itself confronted in the territory that it had acquired was an outbreak of the dread disease, the small-pox, in the summer of 1870. Whisky traders,coming in through Montana via the Missouri Valley which had been swept by the disease,communicated the infection to the Blackfoot with whom they had come to trade. The

Blackfoot took it in the fall and early winter and died by thousands. The Cree tribes caught it from the Blackfoot and the disease ran the whole length of the North Saskatchewan. From the Crees the half-breeds became infected and also the whites around the Hudson's Bay Company's posts.

At Fort Edmonton, there were a very few cases among the white people. The factor ordered the gates of the Fort closed and no Indian was allowed within the stockade. At St. Albert, the four Oblates there, Fathers Leduc and Bourvine and Brothers Doucet and Blanchet, fought the disease valiantly and were in turn stricken down. Father Lacombe, returning from a trip north to Dunvegan to visit a fellow priest, got the first word of the terrible disease, that had invaded his mission and was carrying off his Métis, from an old Indian at St. Paul, who told him that it was the small-pox, the same disease which had ravaged their country sixty years before. The Reverend Father hurried to add his ministrations to the stricken settlement, practically the whole population of which was down with the disease.(1)

(1) Hughes, Katherine, Father Lacombe, New York, 1914, p 182ff.

The St. Albert settlement had all along been steadily growing and far outnumbered the population of Fort Edmonton. By the year 1870, there was a population of about eight hundred persons. They were mostly half-breeds with farms on the north shore of Big Lake and along the Sturgeon. So great were the inroads of the small-pox epidemic that by the spring of that year the numbers were reduced to five hundred. Most of the Indian children under the care of the Grey nuns in the orphanage also succumbed.(1) The epidemic had spent its force by September of 1871. An accurate count of the number of deaths in the Edmonton district is difficult to get. Over three thousand Crees and Blackfoot were reported to have died. Father Lacombe put the number at twenty-five hundred.(2) "It was estimated," said the Honourable Frank Oliver who came in 1876, "that the visitation of the small-pox cut the Indian and half-breed population of what is now Alberta in half. The settlement never again achieved the numbers that it had before the small-pox epidemic. The horrors of the visitation were such that for years the native population dated everything from the year of the small-pox."(3)

(1) Hughes,Katherine,Father Lacombe,New York, 1914, p 182ff.

(2) Ibid. p 185.

(3) Information given to the writer personally in an interview with the Honourable Frank Oliver,August,1931.

Not only was the half-breed settlement around the mission of St. Albert hard hit by the small-pox epidemic but at the same time the changing habits of the buffalo had a disintegrating effect. It was on the buffalo hunt that the population had depended for its main food supply,although they had grown a small crop of grain and vegetables to supplement it and also barley for their horses. Many of the half-breeds who survived but whose families were destroyed by the small-pox, moved out to follow the receding buffalo herds and never came back.

In the midst of the small-pox epidemic Fort Edmonton was visited by a noted traveller and soldier in the person of Captain W.F.Butler. While at Fort Garry in connection with the Expeditionary Force, sent out to quell the first Riel rebellion of 1870,Captain Butler was commissioned by the Honourable A.G.Archibald,the first Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories, shortly after his taking office on the flight of Riel, to proceed westward to report on conditions generally in the North-West Territories.

Disturbing reports had reached the authorities that various disorders prevailed in the settlement along the Saskatchewan, rendering life and property unsafe. The Lieutenant-Governor desired that the existing state of affairs and the needs of the country should be examined and reported upon from an entirely independent point of view so that the government might take steps to enact the proper remedial ordinances. "I was the bearer and owner of two commissions," wrote Captain Butler, "By virtue of the first I was empowered to confer upon two gentlemen in the Saskatchewan the rank and status of justice of the peace for Rupert's Land and the North-West Territories, and in the second I was appointed to that rank and status myself."(1) Captain Butler was also instructed to ascertain the extent of the ravages of the small-pox that was then raging among Cree and Blackfoot tribes. That the government should inform itself immediately of conditions was felt to be imperative as the latest news from the Saskatchewan was one long record of death among Indians and half-breeds.

An account of his experiences and travels in Canada and the reasons for his being sent to the North-West

(1) Butler, W.F., The Great Lone Land, London, 1873, p 201.

Territories are set forth at length by Captain Butler in his book, "The Great Lone Land", a title singularly appropriate for the vast region lying to the West between Fort Garry and the Rocky Mountains, where as yet there were only a few Hudson's Bay Company's posts, a small half-breed population and wandering Indians.

Captain Butler reached Edmonton towards the end of November, 1870. The place apparently impressed him favourably. He described it as- "a large five-sided fort with the usual flanking bastions and high stockades. It has within these stockades many commodious and well-built wooden houses and differs in cleanliness and order of its arrangements from the general run of trading forts in the Indian country..... Farming operations, boat-building and flour milling are carried on extensively at the fort and a blacksmith's forge is also kept going."(1) The traveller's stay was brief,however. After three or four days, he resumed his journey westward over the mountains. "My business with the officer in charge of Fort Edmonton was soon concluded," he noted. "It principally consisted in conferring on him by commission the same high judicial functions which had been entrusted to me before setting

(1) Butler, W. F., The Great Lone Land, London, 1873, p 258.

out to the Indian territory." (1) After executing his commission he made this terse comment- "There was one very serious drawback to the possession of magisterial or other authority in the Saskatchewan in as much as there existed no means whatever of putting that authority in force."(2)

With regard to the second mission, an investigation into the ravages of the small-pox, Captain Butler's instructions read- "You are to ascertain as far as you can in what places and among what tribes and what settlements of whites the small-pox is now prevailing, including the extent of its ravages and every particular you can ascertain in connection with the rise and spread of the disease..... to take a supply of medicines for the disease and to leave a copy of written instructions for the proper treatment of the disease with the chief officer of each fort as you pass and with any clergyman or other intelligent person outside the forts." (3) Captain Butler did bring a couple of cases of medicine with him but they had been badly packed and the jolting and long exposure during the cold weather on the trip rendered them of little use.

(1) Butler, W.G., The Great Lone Land, London, 1873, p 258.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid. Appendix, p 354.

Captain Butler was also the bearer of an order-in-council from the Lieutenant-Governor prohibiting under heavy penalties the sale, distribution or possession of alcohol. The sale of alcohol to the Indians had been stopped by the Hudson's Bay Company in the Saskatchewan district some ten years before but fur traders and whisky traders principally from across the United States border had kept it up. "This law," he wrote, "if enforced, will do much to remove at least one of the leading sources of demoralization."(1)

The ravages of the smallpox led to a feeling in the Edmonton district that a health campaign was necessary and steps were taken locally to combat the disease. "On April 21st, 1871, the following gentlemen met at Edmonton House and organized the Saskatchewan District Board of Health to take measures to stamp out the small -pox and prevent its spreading to adjoining districts: William J. Christie, the Hudson's Bay Company's Chief Factor; Reverend George McDougall, Methodist minister; Reverend Father Leduc, Reverend Father Andre; Richard Hardisty, Hudson's Bay Company. The following

(1) Butler, W. F. The Great Lone Land, London, 1873, Appendix, p 377.

were named members of the board: Bishop Grandin,St. Albert, Bishop Farrand, Lac La Biche, Father Lacombe,Plains, Father Tourmond, Lac Ste Anne, Reverend Henry Steinhauer, Whitefish Lake,Reverend Peter Campbell, Pigeon Lake, Reverend John McDougall,Victoria,and John Bunn, Edmonton,Secretary."(1)

After much discussion over preventive methods with regard to the spread of the disease, it was resolved: "That no furs,buffalo robes or leather be allowed to be exported from the Saskatchewan district that season; that any person leaving the district should first appear before a justice of the peace and swear that he had no robes, fur,leather or other articles likely to carry infection and that he had been free from smallpox for three months..... On these requirements being complied with the person was granted a certificate permitting him to leave the district.

"The board took several other precautionary measures and formulated a request to the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba to appoint an efficient medical officer to visit the country, and to be placed under the instructions of the board as to his further movements."(2)

Just how roving bands of Indians or half-breeds in search of the buffalo were to be prevented from moving from place to place by the machinery of a Board of Health is not stated.

(1) Begg,Alexander, History of the North-West, Toronto, 1894, v II, p 230.

(2) Ibid. v II, p 230.

After Rupert's Land had been handed over by the Hudson's Bay Company to the Dominion of Canada the coming of the Mounted Police in 1874 was the first visible evidence of the establishment there of law and order by the Canadian Government. It marked the change from the old order to the new.Of the police posts to be established in the North-West Territories one on the North Saskatchewan was to be in the vicinity of Edmonton. A division of fifty men under Colonel Jarvis and Sergeant-Major Sam Steele arrived at Edmonton from Macleod in the fall of 1874 and wintered in the Hudson's Bay Company's fort. The government at Ottawa, being totally unfamiliar with conditions in the West,entrusted to the commanding officer the task,with wide discretionary powers, of locating the police post. It was stipulated, however, that it must be placed within a radius of twenty miles from Edmonton and on the south side of the river. The late Mr. James Gibbons, an old timer, who was a resident of Edmonton at the time, is authority for the statement that the ground on which the University of Alberta now stands was seriously considered as the site of police headquarters. Colonel Jarvis finally selected the site of Fort Saskatchewan just within the twenty mile limit. "There were traditions that the location of the force at Fort Saskatchewan,such a distance from Edmonton, was a manifestation of personal pique on the part of Colonel Jarvis against the officers of the Hudson's Bay

Company but it is more likely that the location was made rather with a view to future railway development. The Beaver Hills lie squarely across the direct route of any railway from Winnipeg to Edmonton. To avoid the hills-then thought to be impassible for railway construction-the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway through the Yellowhead Pass was projected by the Canadian Government to run south of the Beaver Hills. When the survey was made,the line passed through what is now Leduc, twenty miles south of Edmonton. Colonel Jarvis saw that a slight detour would carry a railway, coming from Winnipeg and heading for Jasper,around the north end of the Beaver Hills to the point at which he located Fort Saskatchewan and where all conditions were most favourable for a railway crossing of the river. At that time all signs pointed to early railway construction through the fertile belt, as the country between Edmonton and Winnipeg was known at that date. But every condition seemed unfavourable to Edmonton being on the main line of railway. The construction of the Canadian National Railway later justified Colonel Jarvis's judgment but it meant waiting thirty years." (1)

(1) Oliver, Hon. Frank,Edmonton Bulletin,
September 17th,1921.

With the surrender of their charter rights to the British Government and the transfer to Canada began a new era in the history of the Hudson's Bay Company and also of the North-West. By the transfer an enormous area of land became Crown property and was rapidly made available for settlement. It was in harmony with this development that the year 1870 marks the definite beginning of Edmonton as a settlement:hitherto it had been merely a fur-trading post. In selecting its land about the various posts the Company naturally chose the full quota of three thousand acres around the principal ones and smaller areas in the neighborhood of those of less importance. In the case of Edmonton the Company selected the maximum amount of three thousand acres,no doubt believing that Edmonton was a spot where a large city was likely to grow up. Thus came into existence the Hudson's Bay Reserve which has been a factor of very considerable economic importance in the growth of Edmonton.

The reserve at Edmonton was surveyed in 1870 by the Company's surveyor. "In width the area was about a mile from east to west with the post located on the river bank about midway between the boundaries. This survey gave a definite starting point at which private rights might begin,beyond their limits was open for settlement."(1)

(1) Oliver, Hon. Frank, article in Queen's Quarterly,Winter, 1930, p 92.

Although there existed as yet no legal means of acquiring or transferring land,a few intrepid settlers took up claims immediately adjoining the reserve.

The first settler to come in was the Reverend George McDougall who for some years had been in charge of a Methodist mission at Victoria, eighty miles down the river, where there was a settlement of half-breeds. There had been no Protestant minister permanently stationed at Edmonton before this date and the Reverend George McDougall thought the time was ripe for the establishment of a Methodist mission here. He came to Edmonton in May of 1871 and staked two claims on behalf of the Methodist Missionary Society,immediately adjoining the Hudson's Bay reserve on the east. These claims were situated two hundred feet above the river and were a very choice location.(1) On the first claim the mission was established, the site of the present McDougall church, and the second was for the parsonage. Mr. McDougall erected the first house outside the fort; this, the parsonage, was on the site of the present Memorial Hall. "The church was built in 1871," wrote the Honourable Frank Oliver, "entirely by voluntary labour; it was of logs but sheeted inside and out with lumber, sawn and dressed by hand. It would have been a credit to any community at that date."(2) As land was plentiful about two hundred feet frontage was alloted to the church

(1) Oliver,Honourable Frank, Queen's Quarterly, Winter Number,Kingston,Ont.,1930, p 93.

(2) Ibid.

and also to the parsonage. A fence was put around both claims: the land in front of the mission was set aside for a garden and that just behind the church for a cemetery. "It is not too much to say that the establishment of the settlement of Edmonton,aside from the Hudson's Bay Company,was due to the foresight and energy of the Reverend George McDougall."(1) For the next twelve years the Edmonton community continued to grow slowly but steadily.

Following the Reverend George McDougall's example ,a number of pioneers staked claims along the river bank from the Hudson's Bay reserve line eastward between 1871 and 1874. These pioneers were: David McDougall, son of the Reverend George McDougall, who held the next ten chains which extended to the vicinity of the present Bulletin office and included the site of the Edmonton Club and the Macdonald Hotel; then in succession came the claims,approximately ten chains each, of Henry Hardisty,Richard Hardisty, E. McGillivray,Donald McLeod,James Rowland, whose claim included the slope of the hill down to the Riverdale flats; then William Rowland and Kenneth McDonald,whose property ran to Rat Creek and included the former penitentiary property and a large part of Riverdale. On the west of the Hudson's Bay reserve Malcolm Groat,also an ex-Hudson's Bay Company man, was the first to stake his claim. "As there was no one between him and the Rocky Mountains,he staked a mile square."(2) "These original claims with the Hudson's Bay reserve

(1) Oliver, Hon. Frank, article in Queen's Quarterly,Winter,1930, p 93.

(2) Ibid.

occupied the area that about 1890 became incorporated as the town of Edmonton.....it may fairly be claimed that the staking of these claims was in effect the founding of the city of Edmonton."(1)

Mr. Richard Hardisty finding that his connection with the Hudson's Bay Company prevented his residing on his property afterwards sold it to James Sinclair. Mr. Henry Hardisty and Mr. E. McGillivray never improved their claims. Mr. Colin Fraser,later,became the owner of the claim of the latter,while that of the former passed equally into the hands of Mr. Richard Hardisty and Mr. D. McLeod. From the time of staking their claims the original holders, with these one or two exceptions,took up continuous residence on the land,improved it and were considered and acknowledged as the owners.(2)

The example of the original claimants was quickly followed by other settlers. Extending farther eastward claims of similar size were soon taken up by James Kirkness, John Fraser and George Gullion. The farms of these three now constitute the Highlands. They were spoken of in the early '80's as the Lower Settlement. On the flat, in front of the Methodist Mission property,Donald Ross, a miner from Omenica,took up what is now the Ross estate.(3) Westward from the Groat estate the land was also quickly taken up. By 1876 there were a number of farms out on the St. Albert trail and just beyond the Groat

(1) Oliver, Hon. Frank,article in Queen's Quarterly,Winter,1930, p 93.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin,February 11th,1882.

(3) Information given personally to the writer by the Hon. Frank Oliver,August 1931.

claim, near the present 124th St., a trading store was opened by John Norris and his son-in-law R. Logan,both ex-Hudson's Bay Comany men. The settlers in this direction were all ex-miners who had strayed across the mountains. These farms were owned by "Big Majeau", George Gagnon, Edmond Juneau, the Harnois brothers, Dan Noyes and Pascal Marichal. When the St. Albert settlement was reached, farms of two more ex-miners,who had turned farmers, were to be found- Edmond Brosseau and Octave Majeau,generally known as "Little Majeau". There was also the large farm of William Cust, who had come from Peace River to settle at St. Albert. There was still a large native population around the St. Albert settlement in addition to the Roman Catholic Mission.

"On the south side of the river, between 1871 and 1874,a water-mill was established by the Hudson's Bay Company on what is now Gallagher's Flats. William Bird was the miller. It was a perfectly good mill for the country at the time. Its only draw-back was that there was seldom enough water to make it run. Mr. Bird acquired the land on the flat east of Mill Creek as a farm. David Daignault took the strip west of Mill Creek to the river. This was afterwards acquired by Donald Ross and was the site of the first commercially operated coal mine in the Edmonton district. The south entrance to the Low Level Bridge is on this property. On the plateau west of the Mill Creek valley and fronting on the river were the farms of: Charles Gauthier,George Kipling, William Mavor,now the site of the south side Canadian Pacific railway station, Joe Macdonald,on which the south end of the High Level

Bridge was later built,L.Gurneau(1), and John Ashen, now the site of the University Buildings. John Walter at a later date occupied the flat that is now Walterdale, and George McDonald lived and farmed in a small way east of Mill Creek on the area now known as Bonnie Doon. These constituted the population of Edmonton and surroundings in 1874,when the Mounted Police arrived." (2)

"When this settlement was made, St. Paul,four hundred and fifty miles south west of Winnipeg, was the base of supply for Rupert's Land and railroad extension north-westwards from St. Paul had only begun. The mail packet from Winnipeg, nine hundred miles away, arrived twice during each winter by Hudson's Bay Company dog-team. In the summer, there was no regular mail delivery; letters were carried by the kindness of travelling friends. There was,of course,no telegraph. Portage la Prairie,sixty miles from Winnipeg, was the nearest established settlement to the eastward. Under such conditions the town of Edmonton,although its population was small in numbers and made of various diverse elements, had importance as a centre and rallying point in the westward march of civilization that was of great value in the earlier years." (3)

(1) This appears to be the original spelling of the name of this person whose name later became associated with the residential district known as "Garneau" in Edmonton South.

(2) Oliver, Hon. Frank, Edmonton Bulletin, September 17th,1921.

(3) Oliver, Hon. Frank, in Queen's Quarterly, Winter,1930, p 93ff.

Previous to the coming of the mounted police in 1874, the number of new settlers had been small. The Hudson's Bay Company had handed over the country in 1869 and had withdrawn from any participation in the effort to keep order. There was no law and no means of enforcing it. The enmity among various Indian tribes, frequently debauched by whisky traders, made the settler live at considerable risk. The coming of the police changed all that. With the enforcement of law and order and the control of the rum traffic settlers, feeling that their lives and labours would be unmolested, began to trickle in. By 1880 and 1881 settlement had increased rapidly. The prospect, because of the preliminary Canadian Pacific railway surveys, that there would be a transcontinental railway coming through Edmonton to cross the mountains through the Tête Jaune Pass brought in many pioneers to wait for the railway and to reap what benefit they could from their foresight. Because of this influx of settlers the Hudson's Bay Company had their reserve subdivided by a man named Bourne in the fall of 1881. He was told to make a block survey and this is the survey which stands today.(1) Government surveys were beginning to be made farther east and much speculation and uneasiness arose in the community as to what the attitude of the Government would be towards those who had already taken up unsurveyed land and settled on it. The authorities had had the base lines run two years before in 1879 and then had done nothing more. Much trouble

(1) Information given in an interview to the writer by the Hon. Frank Oliver, August, 1931.

would have been avoided if the survey had proceeded then. As it was, people were in a quandary. Those already settled did not know whether they would be dispossessed of their holdings, when a survey should be made, and the uncertainty of land tenure was a deterrent to new settlers coming in. Land values were rising all the time and it was a case of "what we have we'll hold."

Some of the early settlers, whose claims adjoined the Hudson's Bay property, decided, as the government was taking no action in the matter, to find out exactly where they stood with regard to the boundaries of their property. They therefore had the dividing lines run by the surveyor, Mr. Bourne, who had been laying out the reserve of the Hudson's Bay Company around the fort, conforming to the Hudson's Bay lines north and south and back three miles from the river. It was the intention, when this work was completed, to send the plan to Ottawa with the request that the government recognize and set its stamp of approval on the survey. The settlers on the front claims soon found themselves in difficulties. When these front claims were first taken up they were supposed to run at right angles to the general course of the river which would be in a northwesterly direction and back three miles. This new survey of the original river claims, paralleling the lines of the reserve, encroached upon the land of settlers who had come in and settled on unclaimed land around Rat Creek, improved it and built their homes. Naturally, they strenuously objected to a survey which would deprive them of their land on which they had spent so much labour. The obstacle to any hope of a satisfactory adjustment

among the settlers, who were inclined to come to an amicable agreement among themselves, was the fact that the lines of the Hudson's Bay Company's survey were fixed and nothing could be done until the government stepped in and settled the matter. It was even found that the Hudson's Bay Company's own eastern line cut about nine feet off the corner of Mr. Ross's hotel. That gentleman is said to have facetiously notified the Company to move the land from under his house as it was put there without his knowledge and consent. The legal rights to private property were in this undetermined and unsatisfactory state when the town experienced the excitement of the land boom in the fallof 1881 and the winter of 1882. The tide of land speculation was general all over the West due to the building of the Canadian Pacific railroad and to the desire of speculators to preempt prospective town sites in anticipation that the railroad would pass that way. Because of the preliminary survey through the Yellowhead Pass,it was the fervent hope of the Edmonton settlement that it would be on the main line of railroad. (1)

The Hudson's Bay Company subdivided their reserve in October 1881, laid out a town plot and put their lots on the market, offering free sites for schools and churches. When the sale opened there was such a ready demand for the property by the residents of Edmonton and district and the lots were bought up so rapidly that the surveyor was kept busy laying them out. "Most of the lots purchased were on

(1) Based on information found in the columns of the Edmonton Bulletin, 1881 and 1882.

Main St. (now Jasper Avenue) and the cross street leading to the steamboat landing."(1) This must have been the present 109th St., as the steamboat landing was directly under the High Level Bridge on the north bank.(2) After selling four hundred lots the Company stopped the sale "thinking they had parted with a sufficient quantity of property for a full town site and that they might safely keep the rest until the place grew."(3) These first purchases were generally speaking made by the residents of the district but immediately orders began to pour in from outside and the only way they could be met was to deal with the original buyers. Each day the price of lots took a higher flight as orders became thicker and holders became fewer and firmer.

As yet the land of the Hudson's Bay Company alone had received official survey and title. Unofficially, as we have seen, Mr. Bourne had surveyed the property claimed by some private citizens, but neither to these claims nor to any others was legalized title in existence. Now that there was considerable buying and selling of land,the matter of drawing up satisfactory papers confirming to each purchaser undisputed possession of his land was exceedingly difficult, particularly when a third party entered into the transaction. Lots or claims continued to change hands sometimes several times. All available land close to the community was rapidly taken up. By the spring of 1882,"every claim on the north side of the river for five miles above the town and

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, November 5th,1881.

(2) Information obtained in an interview with the Honourable Frank Oliver, August,1931.

(3) Edmonton Bulletin, April 29th,1882.

eight miles below had been taken and very nearly the same on the south side besides most of the good claims on both sides for several miles back."(1) In this boom atmosphere with the sudden increase of land values, the people went land-crazy. The uncertainty of the attitude of the government in confirming or disallowing the ownership of the land to the settlers or squatters who had settled on it, improved and were then in possession of it ,together with the sudden rise of land values around Edmonton, led to several attempts at claim jumping by persons who cast covetous eyes on choice pieces of property.

The most famous case of claim jumping was in connection with the land formerly held by Mr. J. Sinclair who had acquired it by purchase. This property,known as river lot 3,was one of the original claims staked to the east of the Hudson's Bay Company's line by the first group to take up land. The claimant,Mr. Richard Hardisty, had built a house on it but because of his connection with the Hudson's Bay Company he had been unable to reside there and so sold it to Mr. Sinclair in whose possession it was for a number of years. Sinclair had not lived on the property himself but had rented it from time to time and was the acknowledged owner. In the summer of 1881, a fence was put part way around the Sinclair property and a small patch of potatoes planted. The building was subsequently rented to the A. Macdonald Company for a store and they were the present occupants of it. During the year 1882,the property changed hands twice,Mr.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 8th,1882.

Sinclair selling it back to Mr. R. Hardisty,who in turn disposed of it to a small group consisting of Messrs. A.W.Kippen, Dr. Wilson and others.(1)

The episode happened thus: A Mr. L. George, an American by birth, who had been in the employ of Mr. J. A. McDougall of Villiers and Pearson, under cover of the Homestead Act, and evidently as a proxy for and acting under the instructions of another party (J.M.Bannerman), came along on Saturday morning,February 4th,1882, drove in his stakes at the front of this particular piece of property and having hired some men proceeded to erect a small frame house. The news quickly spread around the little settlement and discussions were many regarding the justification of claim jumping. The present owners soon appeared on the scene and forbad the carpenters and also Mr. George to go ahead with the construction. Disregarding this injunction the building operations were proceeded with and by night fall on Saturday the frame-work was up and Mr. George erected a tent in it and slept there. Over Sunday building activity was suspehded. Excitement was rife in the little settlement and rumours abounded of other jumps to be made, contingent upon the success of this one. When building operations were resumed on Monday morning, the proprietors, finding that the law gave them no means of evicting those who had taken possession,decided to use force. "By this time,"noted the Bulletin in reporting the event,"there was no difficulty in getting men willing to make this a test case and

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, February 11th,1882.

carry matters with as high a hand as might be necessary . About four o'clock the crowd began to gather and in a few minutes one hundred and fifty men were on the ground. There seemed to be no recognized leader each man taking what part he thought fit. The proprietors then told Mr. George the object of their coming and asked him to remove the building from the premises within half an hour, promising if he were unable to do so to render him all the assistance in their power. He replied that he did not intend to remove it, at the same time producing a revolver and pointing it at those nearest to him. The house had not been boarded up and he was standing just inside the studding while the crowd were close around him outside. Mr. D.R.Fraser slipped between the studding and seized George by the hands and Mr. W. Henderson reached through and took the revolver from him. Some of the crowd also reached through and seized George trying to pull him out of the building but as they were attempting to pull him through different studs at the same time they were not successful,so he was allowed to remain. No further resistance was attempted and the carpenters who were at work were requested to pick up their tools and leave, which they did. While they were waiting for ropes and a team to draw the building away an animated discussion was carried on among Messrs. Kippen,Fraser,George,J.M. Bannerman (by whom George was evidently employed to jump the claim) and others ,but neither party could convince the other and as the discussion got rather tame and the rope was long in coming some of the crowd began to build a fire by which to warm themselves,while

others began to tear the building down. At last the ropes arrived and also Mr. M. McCauley's team and the building was dragged straight ahead to the edge of the high bank overlooking the river and about two hundred feet above it. Mr. George remained in the building all the time until it came to the edge of the bank,when he politely stepped out at the back end. The crowd then turned and dragged it along the edge of the bank until it came on Colin Fraser's property and,after the tent and bedding were lifted out,the house was tumbled over,wrecking it completely. The balance of the building material,which was lying where the house stood,was thrown over the bank after it. The revolver was then handed back to Mr. George.

"A group comprising Messrs.Kippen,Garneau and others then betook itself to the store of A. Macdonald and Company and demanded to know the intentions of the firm in regard to the property,whether they intended to jump or not and whether they intended to pay rent or not,adding the remark that ,if they intended to jump it,they and their goods would be turned out inside of five minutes. Mr. C. Stewart,who was in charge of the store, declined to answer on the ground that he did not consider these men had any right to ask this question. The deputation then withdrew and the crowd gradually dispersed."(1) Mr. Stewart,however, set out immediately for Fort Saskatchewan to claim police protection from the Mounties and during that night a group of men,armed, kept watch in the store of

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, February 11th,1882.

the A. Macdonald Company for fear of an attack by the Vigilance Committee which was being organized.

On Monday evening, February 6th, about one hundred of the now thoroughly aroused and indignant citizens gathered in McDougall's hall to take steps for the mutual protection of their property. The organization of a Vigilance Committee or mutual protection society to uphold each other in their right to their claims was the result. "A standing committee of thirteen members including a captain and two lieutenants was appointed, which should have the power to take action in cases where promptitude and secrecy were necessary with the understanding that the whole society should back them."(1)

The aftermath of the "house moving and wrecking" episode was the arrest of the principal participants under a warrant of J.M. Bannerman, for whom apparently Mr. L. George had acted. The preliminary examination was held in the school room before Captain Gagnon, J.P. It is interesting to note that of the citizens implicated in this affair several attained to posts of responsibility and prominence in after life. Those arraigned before the justice of the peace were- Mr. Frank Oliver, Mr. M. McCauley, Mr. D.R.Fraser, Mr. James McDonald, Mr. J. Lake, Mr. A. W. Kippen, Mr. G. Gagnon, Mr. L.Gurneau and Mr. W. Henderson. After the hearing of considerable evidence they were all committed for trial at the Saskatchewan district court to be held June 15th, 1882.(2)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, February 18th, 1882.

(2) Ibid, March 4th, 1882.

As there was no organized municipal or district governmental machinery, whenever matters of general import to the community had to be dealt with a public meeting was called at which all present had the privilege and opportunity of speaking their mind. The arrest and committal for trial of several prominent members of the settlement, with consequences no one could foresee, was an event which stirred the little community deeply, particularly so because public opinion generally approved of the way they had acted under the circumstances. A public meeting was therefore held to discuss the matter on Thursday evening, March 23rd, 1882. Mr. Richard Hardisty, the chairman, read the resolution for the purpose of considering which the meeting had been called. This was in fact "a petition to the Governor-General setting forth the state of insecurity which prevails here in regard to the ownership of the land, stating that certain persons had taken advantage of the fact of no surveys having been made to take possession of land owned by other parties; that in resisting this certain parties had placed themselves in danger from the law and the intervention of His Excellency on their behalf was requested as they were law-abiding citizens and had acted in the interests of the law-abiding portion of the community."(1) The adoption of this resolution was carried unanimously. It was signed by the chairman, Mr. Richard Hardisty, on behalf of the meeting and by Reverend Père Leduc on behalf of

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, March 25th, 1882.

Bishop Grandin and the people of the St. Albert settlement and forwarded to its destination.(1)

The fateful 15th of June in due course arrived and court was opened, stipendary magistrate Richardson and Captain Gagnon presiding conjointly. The house-moving case was called and the aforementioned men implicated were all put on trial together, charged with malicious injury to a house which was the property of Joseph McK. Bannerman, as a proxy for whom Mr. L. George had evidently acted. All pleaded "not guilty". A jury of six was empanelled and the evidence given at the preliminary hearing rehearsed. The magistrate in addressing the jury declared "that when a person was in rightful occupation of a piece of land he was allowed to exercise the right of ownership until another could produce a better title to it and then that other could only displace him by legal process, the occupant having the right at common law to resist with force any forcible encroachment of his rights."(2) The jury after a short absence returned a verdict of "not guilty".

In the civil court,which immediately followed that of the criminal court,action for damages was brought against this same group of men. The plaintiff claimed damages to the extent of $825 for the destruction of the shanty, loss of time and injury to business. The judgment rendered gave the plaintiff compensation for the lumber destroyed only, amounting to the sum of $40 which was to be met collectively by the defendants.(3)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, March 25th,1882 .
(2) Ibid , June 17th,1882.
(3) Ibid, June 24th,1882.

The land boom of the winter of 1881-1882 collapsed in the spring of 1882. None of the residents had made very much money and none had lost much,outside speculators being the heaviest losers. "The collapse of the boom in the spring of 1882 and the diversion of the route of the Canadian Pacific Railway from the Yellowhead to the Kicking Horse Pass put Edmonton two hundred miles from the track of progress and left the Edmonton country in a state of stagnation which lasted until the Klondike rush of 1898."(1)

The survey,so long and anxiously awaited,was begun in mid-summer of 1882. In July, a party of Dominion Land Surveyors arrived to survey the Edmonton district into townships. They made Edmonton their headquarters and began to work in the near vicinity.(2) They were shortly followed by a surveyor named Deane who came to make a survey of the river lots and the settlement proper. By early September all the river claims east of the reserve had been surveyed and a start made on those to the west of it.(3) On the south side of the river the survey began at Omand's claim and worked eastward.(4) The survey of the St. Albert settlement was then started and continued through the winter.

The completion of this work,so long looked for, put the settlers in a much happier frame of mind. One more difficulty in connection with their pioneer life had been smoothed away. They

(1) Oliver,Hon. Frank, article in Edmonton Bulletin, September 17th,1921.
(2) Edmonton Bulletin,July 15th and 22nd,1882.
(3) Ibid, September 2nd, 1882.
(4) Ibid.,September 9th,1882.

could now improve their claims with the assurance that they would reap the fruits of their toil and that there would be no recurrence of the land troubles of the previous winter.

CHAPTER V

The End of Isolation: the Coming of the Telegraph, the Newspaper and the Post-Office.

When the government of Canada despatched the force of mounted police to establish and maintain order in the newly acquired North-West,little was known of the conditions prevailing in that vast area. It was felt that in view of the smallness of the force and the difficulties likely to be encountered in connection with the Indians and lawless whisky smugglers, contact must be maintained between the mounted police and government headquarters and this could only be done adequately by telegraph. The construction of a telegraph line therefore became a necessity. In the year 1871, a telegraph service was established from Ottawa to Fort Garry via Minnesota and, in 1874, the government entered into a contract with Sifton, Glass and Company of Winnipeg to construct a telegraph line from Winnipeg via Selkirk, Manitoba, and the Narrows of Lake Manitoba- following the route surveyed for the proposed Canadian Pacific Railway - to Livingstone, or Swan River as it was more generally known, which had been chosen as the seat of government for the North-West Territories. Livingstone,however, was found to be unsuitable for this purpose and was abandoned a few months later in favour of Battleford, which was deemed a much more suitable site

for the capital and was already the headquarters of the North-West Mounted Police. The telegraph line was therefore extended to Battleford and was in operation by July, 1876. It was then continued westward to a terminal point about thirty miles from Hay Lakes. There was,however, no telegraph office between Battleford and the western end of the line nor was there a settler between that place and Fort Saskatchewan. The maintenance of the line from Battleford westward was in charge of Messrs. James and Robert McKernan,the former residing at Hay Lakes and the latter at Grizzly Bear Coulee. Mr. James McKernan's contract was merely to maintain the line. However, he was also an operator and frequently sent and received messages at Hay Lakes. These were chiefly for government officials travelling through the country and for the North-West Mounted Police stationed at Fort Saskatchewan. In fact, the first message to be sent over this western portion of the service was from Major Jarvis, the officer commanding at Fort Saskatchewan, who communicated with Colonel Walker, in charge of the police at Battleford, on November 20th,1877.

A telegraph line thirty-five miles away was found to be exceedingly inconvenient and in fact of little use to the residents of Edmonton. In 1878, they petitioned the government to extend the line to the settlement and,with characteristic enterprise,coupled with this request an offer to meet the cost of the extension, if their wishes were acceded to . The

government accepted the offer and the extension was made under the direction of Mr. James McKernan, Mr. Fuller ,the contractor, supplying the wire and the Hudson's Bay Company the poles and most of the labour. The construction was completed on January 18th,1880,and the telegraph office opened in a building opposite the Fort,owned by Walters and Irvine. The extent of the western line now approximated a thousand miles. The first Edmonton operator was Mr. Alexander Taylor,who had acted in a similar capacity at Hay Lakes. After a few months service, Mr. Taylor relinquished these duties and was succeeded by Mr. George Slack Wood, who retained the post for three years, then leaving Edmonton to reside elsewhere. Mr. Alexander Taylor again assumed the duties of telegraph operator and agent and carried on for several years. When the line was extended to Edmonton the rate was fixed by the contractor on the basis of $3.00 for ten words,Edmonton to Winnipeg, $2.00,Battleford to Winnipeg, and $1.00 ,Edmonton to Battleford, the press rate being one half cent per word.

Mr. Fuller's contract with regard to the telegraph line expired in 1881 and was not renewed.The government,having come to the decision to take the telegraph system over,organized it as a branch of the Public Works Department and a district superintendent was appointed for the North-West with headquarters at Battleford. The line was not reopened immediately,however, on the expiration of Mr. Fuller's contract but a little later a representative of the government was sent to inspect the system,report upon its condition

and requirements and reopen it for business. The authorities shortly after the inspection decided to abandon the existing line east of Humboldt and to construct a new one to Troy(the present Qu'Appelle) at which point it would connect with the Canadian Pacific Railway telegraph. The work was begun in the summer of 1882 and, before the end of the year,the line was completed to Touchwood Hills,about six miles from the Hudson's Bay Company's post of that name. A few years later,when the Hudson's Bay Company opened an office at their post,the name of the government telegraph office was changed to Kutawa. There still remained a gap of some eighty miles between Kutawa and Humboldt, which was bridged by forwarding telegraph messages between the two points through the agency of the mail carrier, who made the round trip each week until the alterations to the line were completed, or by any reliable traveller.(1) This arrangement enabled Edmonton and Battleford to keep in touch with eastern points without too great delay.

From the beginning great difficulty was experienced in keeping the line in a state which would give satisfactory service or in maintaining a continuous service over it at all. Construction had followed the railway survey without regard to its suitability as a telegraph route and with the expectation that

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, January 13th,1883.

the railroad and settlement would come shortly after. Its building was more of a temporary than of a permanent character. The line was carried across lakes and streams and through thick timber in many places. Through the latter but a narrow track had been cut for its passage. This was not kept cleared and owing to rapid growth the line was continually being tapped or broken by the branches,the wire consequently falling into lakes and ponds. The telegraph poles were of poplar, a native wood altogether unsuitable because of its lack of durability, and the wire used was too light for the purpose. The buffalo,roaming the plains,overturned the poles in great numbers by scratching against them, while the wires running through the thick uncut branches of trees were robbed of so much current in wet weather that it was impossible to send messages any distance. The greater part of the line ran through country far from a travelled road and along which there was not a settler and this added to the difficulty of keeping it in repair. Forest fires wrought havoc during the spring and autumn seasons. The winter bringing frost-hardened ground was the only time of year when the line was free from interference by the elements. Linemen were few and stationed a hundred miles or more apart. They had to traverse a trail which at certain periods of the year was well nigh impassable and to ford streams at all times, as there were no bridges. Under such circumstances it was impossible to maintain an uninterrupted and satisfactory service.

Owing to the nature of the country west of Battleford, south of the Beaver Hills and around Hay Lakes, that section of the telegraphic system became more and more dilapidated as time went on. In the early summer of 1883, the district superintendent, Mr. T. A. Gisborne, was requested by the settlements to take steps to remedy this condition. It was suggested to him that the service would be improved if the direction of the line were changed so that it should branch off from the old line near where the Victoria trail crossed it and come in by way of Beaver Lake and Fort Saskatchewan to Edmonton. Thus these settlements would be served and a route would be obtained much less difficult to keep in order. The residents of Fort Saskatchewan had expressed themselves as willing to defray part of the expense for the privilege of getting telegraphic communication. The authorities seemed at first to favour the proposition but in due course word came from the western superintendent to the local operator, Mr. Taylor, that the government had no money available to alter the route but was prepared to sanction the change, if it could be done without expense on its part. The local operator was authorized to ascertain how much assistance the settlements of Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan and Beaver Lake were prepared to give and how they would welcome the suggestion to supply the poles and move the wire from the route to be abandoned to the one proposed. This project did not meet with favour in any of the settlements concerned but they expressed themselves as willing to give considerable assistance if telegraphic

communication could be secured with the Canadian Pacific Railway telegraph line at Calgary. In forwarding this reply to the district superintendent the advantages of the Calgary communication were stressed, viz., less distance- only one hundred and ninety-eight miles,lower cost of building and service through more important settlements.(1) The district superintendent himself inspected the line westward from Battleford in September, 1883, and saw its unsatisfactory state and the necessity of its being rebuilt. While at Edmonton, he made arrangements for a telegraph line to run from there to Fort Saskatchewan with a loop into Clover Bar.(2) In the fall of 1884, the Department of Public Works definitely came to the decision to change the telegraph route between Battleford and Edmonton. It was not only in a state of extreme dilapidation but passed through a country where there was but one settlement,Bresaylor, leaving without service Indian agencies at Onion and Saddle Lakes on the north side of the Saskatchewan River.(3) The new route was to run along the North Saskatchewan from Battleford to Edmonton with a view to establishing communication with the police posts at Fort Pitt and Fort Saskatchewan and the Indian departments at Pitt,Saddle Lake,Victoria and Edmonton. It was considered that this arrangement would be of greater service than a line merely to Calgary.(4) Crossing the river

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, August 4th,1883.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin,October 6th,1883.

(3) Macdonald,J.S.,Manuscript in Provincial Library,Edmonton.

(4) Edmonton Bulletin, January 24th,1885.

at Fort Pitt the line would be along or near to well travelled trails its entire length, would avoid lakes, streams and timber for the most part and would thus be relatively easy to keep in repair. The breaking out of the rebellion in 1885 so engrossed the attention of the government and the people of the West that this change was prevented from going into immediate effect. Construction was started,however, in the spring of 1886 and completed in August,1887. Stronger and more durable material was used in building the new line. Hollow cylinder iron poles, firmly entrenched in the ground, were used for part of the way and successfully withstood prairie fires and other troubles. In other places the tough tamarac replaced the perishable poplar. This line remained in use until it was abandoned forty years later.

Note- Mr. J. Stuart Macdonald from whose manuscript in the Provincial Library of Alberta many of the facts of the foregoing were obtained, was associated with the western telegraph service for almost fifty years in various positions from lineman to superintendent. He was chief operator in the Battleford office in 1880 and became chief inspector of western lines in 1905.

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The coming of the telegraph line to Edmonton in the winter of 1879-80 from its terminal at Hay Lakes, thirty-five miles away, had as one of its immediate consequences the establishment of Edmonton's first newspaper. The settlement at once took advantage of this direct communication to keep informed of what was happening elsewhere in the world. Arrangements were made by public subscription to have a weekly

bulletin of world news compiled in Winnipeg and sent by wire to Edmonton. The local operator, Mr. Alex Taylor, having come in from Hay Lakes to take charge of the telegraph office, had the task of copying the bulletin of news for the settlement. A winter's trial proved this a laborious, expensive and not very satisfactory method. Mr. Taylor conceived the idea that a much better way would be to print the bulletin and place a copy in the hands of each subscriber. After consultation with Mr. Frank Oliver, who had had some experience in the printing trade before coming to the settlement, and who at the time carried on a small store and trading business, they decided to procure jointly a small printing-press so that the following winter's bulletin of news could be printed. An order was forthwith despatched to Philadelphia for a press which was in due course freighted by ox-cart from Winnipeg in the summer of 1880 by Mr. Oliver, who in pursuit of his trading business made the long journey across the plains every summer with his string of carts to Winnipeg, the distributing centre, to bring back his stock of goods for sale in his store the next winter.

"The printing plant comprised a toy press, called a 'model', manufactured in Philadelphia, a pair of cases of lean nonpareil type, a single chase and a few leads, slugs

and dashes. That was all. The press took a sheet about six by eight. The make-up was four pages of two columns to a page, the columns being fourteen ems wide. The press took two pages at each impression, the lock-up being between the pages. The printing plant did not include a heading. The name 'Bulletin' was decided on to indicate a continuance of the bulletin service of the previous winter. On a piece of dry birch wood, Mr. Taylor with his pocket knife cut the words 'The Bulletin'. This was the first heading of the paper and was used until a type-heading was received from Winnipeg by mail."(1)

The "Edmonton Bulletin", the first weekly newspaper to be published in the North-West Territories between Portage la Prairie and the Rocky Mountains, made its initial appearance with the issue of Saturday,October 6th,1880, and was published every Saturday from the first of December until the first of May, the subscription price for the season being $2.00 . There were about two hundred subscribers from the district around who called at the office for their papers.

"The type was set throughout the first winter by a gold miner and homesteader named Collins, who had located temporarily at Clover Bar. The newspaper office was a small

(1) Oliver, Hon. Frank, Article entitled- "Hewed Paper-Head out of Birch Wood, p 12,Christmas Number Western Union Printer,Medicine Hat, December,1920.

outbuilding kindly loaned by the late Donald Ross and was located on the flat near where the Edmonton Hotel stood. Messrs. Taylor and Oliver collaborated on the news matter supplied. The editorials were written by Mr. Oliver. The press service was specially compiled in Winnipeg by the late George H. Ham, then editor of the 'Winnipeg Times', but later of the Canadian Pacific Railway."(1)

The Bulletin's first correspondent was Mr. J. Stewart Macdonald, a pioneer in western telegraph service and chief operator in charge of the Battleford office in 1880. A coincidence of meeting Mr. Oliver in Battleford, en route to Edmonton with the printing-press in his load of freight, led to the arrangement being made with Mr. Macdonald that after the paper got under way he would forward each week by wire any news of interest.(2)

During the spring of 1881, the partnership between Taylor and Oliver was dissolved and in the following fall Mr. Oliver carried on alone. The size of the page was doubled and it was printed in four impressions instead of two. Announcement

(1) Oliver, Hon. Frank, article entitled- "Hewed Paper-Head out of Birch Wood, page 12, Christmas Number, Western Union Printer,Medicine Hat, December ,1920.

(2) Macdonald, J. Stuart, paper read before the Edmonton Historical Society,March 1921, and reported in the Edmonton Journal,March 21st,1921.

was made that it was the intention to publish during the winter only but that, if sufficient support was accorded, the paper would be continued without interruption. By the summer of 1882, the Bulletin proprietor took a new partner in the person of Alexander Dunlop, later proprietor of "The Press" in Neepawa, Manitoba, and the mechanical facilities of the paper were increased by a half medium Gordon press and a small job plant which were freighted up the Saskatchewan river by steamer. With the beginning of volume III in the fall of 1882 the Bulletin was enlarged to four pages of four narrow columns each but the same non-pareil type was used. The last weekly issue appeared on Saturday, April 30th, 1892, the paper being published as a semi-weekly for the first time on May 2nd,1892, and appearing thereafter every Monday and Thursday until November 1899,when the days of issuance were changed to Monday and Friday. In due course the paper became a "daily" making its first appearance in this form on Saturday, January 3rd,1902.

In its initial stages, the early '80's, The Bulletin numbered among its subscribers many people in all parts of Canada. It can justly claim the credit of being largely instrumental in bringing the Edmonton settlement and the surrounding country

to the attention of the outside world in a way that nothing else could have done. Since 1880, the history of Edmonton and neighboring settlements can be found in the columns of "The Bulletin".

* * *

The blue uniformed representative of His Majesty's mail service was a person unknown in the early days when Fort Edmonton was a trading post and outfitting station for the Hudson's Bay Company. Then, the mail came once a year, in the fall, brought by the Company's returning brigade of canoes, and later, York boats, laden with the yearly supplies from York Factory on Hudson's Bay. The arrival of the annual packet was an event of great moment to that remote post and this was all the communication that was had with the 'outside', save when an occasional missive found its way in or out through the courtesy of the chance traveller.

When the transfer was effected by which Prince Rupert's Land became a part of the newly federated Dominion of Canada, settlers began to come in. A small settlement grew up around Fort Edmonton and district, during the '70's, for which it was necessary to make some arrangments for a mail service. In the year 1876, mail service was established between Edmonton and Fort Garry, the distributing point for mail for the West. The trip occupied three weeks each way

and was by dog-team in winter and by horses the rest of the year. There was no mail connection whatever between Edmonton and the southwestern part of the North-West Territories. Indeed, in this region there was not a government post-office at all, although such posts were established there as Fort Walsh, Fort McLeod and Fort Calgary. At these points forces of the North West Mounted Police were stationed and they overcame this handicap by maintaining for their own use a mail service from Fort Benton on the Missouri to Forts McLeod and Calgary and thence to Battleford.(1)

In the early '80's the carrying of mail to points along the north Saskatchewan River was undertaken by contractors. During 1880-81, Messrs. Sinclair and McLane had the contract to carry the mail from Winnipeg to Edmonton for one year, a distance of nine hundred and twenty-five miles.(2) The contractors generally sublet portions of the route on the Winnipeg-Edmonton line with the inevitable confusion and uncertainty of delegated responsibility. In the winter of 1880, "Peter Ballendine of Battleford had the contract for running the mail between that place and Edmonton."(3) The sub-contract was again sub-contracted- "The mail route between Battleford and Edmonton is now divided into two drives. From Battleford to Pitt is run with one set of horses and men and from Pitt to Edmonton with another outfit. Mr. Baker has charge of the Edmonton end for the winter."(4)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, November 18th, 1881.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, December 6th, 1880.

(3) Edmonton Bulletin, December 20th, 1880.

(4) Edmonton Bulletin, January 28th, 1882.

There was no provision for shelters,stopping-places or stations en route for distributing and sorting the mail. Rain and snow, impassable roads, the passage of the mail through so many different hands,brought it about that the service was irregular and mail was often missent and even lost. Indeed,the marvel is that at times the mail got through at all. The uncertainties of the mail delivery are well illustrated by the two following entries from the Bulletin issues of the early '80's.

"The long expected mail arrived at last on Wednesday,eighteen days out from Battleford. It was very heavy having got wet."(1)

And again this item tells its own story--"Eastern mail arrived on Saturday morning early and left on Monday morning,taking the south trail to Battleford. Three through bags and a way bag of mail and four parcels of express matter came on it. No letters came. Four through bags were booked from Winnipeg and the letters are doubtless in the missing bag. Mr. Ballendine,the sub-contractor, who brought the mail this trip, can give no account of it, not knowing whether he received it at Battleford or not. It might have been left at the Beaver River, the only place on the road from Battleford where he was obliged to unload. He will make a thorough search for it on his return trip. It seems the carriers between the different points do not sign a receipt for the matter committed to their charge, the contractors at Winnipeg being responsible for everything. Considerable

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, May 6th,1882.

sums of money were expected by this mail and the non-arrival of the latter is causing considerable anxiety. Although no letters for Edmonton or Fort Saskatchewan came, a miscellaneous assortment for Fort Walsh, Fort Macleod, Winnipeg, and other points along the line, besides some for Edmonton, Ontario, had come and of course had to be hauled back again. Not a mail arrives but brings a large amount of miscarried matter."(1) The missing mail bag eventually was intercepted at Duck Lake and came in on the next trip.

While service from the recipients' standpoint was far from satisfactory, the carriers on their part endured considerable hardship at certain seasons of the year in fulfilling the task entrusted to them- "Mail arrived Saturday afternoon last at five o'clock, ten days out from Battleford, and left on the same hour Monday afternoon. The roads were very bad, the weather stormy and loads heavy. When near Moose Creek, the carrier was obliged to camp for an afternoon as the horses could not be made to face the storm. The load to Fort Saskatchewan was carried in two sleighs and amounted to seven hundred pounds, fifty pounds of which was missent and had to be taken back to different places along the line." (2)

Apparently, the constant irregularity and uncertainty of the arrival of the mail had reached such a state that the dissatisfaction of the community was expressed by the editor of the Bulletin in an issue of the paper:

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, June 10th, 1882.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, January 8th, 1882.

"Nearly half the time in the last three years the mail has been behind time sometimes as much as three weeks and once the spring before last it was six weeks; that particular mail left Winnipeg in February and got here in May. It had a large amount of garden seeds which were too late for sowing that season thereby entailing considerable loss to the settlement.

"In the winter the contractors have not been obliged to take parcels and for express matter, last winter, they charged the sum of forty-five cents a pound..... If mail is to be run at all for the benefit of the people here it is hard to see why they should not have the full benefit as well as those in any other part of the Dominion.

"Another complaint we have to make is that at Battleford when the mail arrived from the east before that from the west had arrived, it would be started east again and eastern bound matter would consequently have to stay at Battleford from the time of the arrival of the western mail until that from the east came in again, nearly three weeks, quite an extension of a trip that ordinarily took four weeks. The principal cause of this way of doing business was the fact that part of the route from Battleford to here was in the hands of a sub-contractor who lacked either the will or ability to put on stock enough to put the mail through in good shape. Since the route was changed from the north to the south side of the Saskatchewan, it has been run the three hundred miles both in summer and winter without change of horses. It would be too much to expect that good time could

be made under such circumstances..... It may be that the service is all that can be given for the amount of subsidy received,be that as it may the service has been far from satisfactory.

"Of course the mail even as it has been carried has been of great benefit to the settlements and at the time of giving of the first contract was all that could reasonably be expected but since that the country has made such progress that it is utterly inadequate to the wants of the community. Once every two weeks is as often perhaps as the mail is needed just now but sufficient subsidy should be given to build stations all along the route and to ensure the carrying of mail according to agreement and when the stations were once up the frequency of the mail could be increased as comparatively little cost and on short notice,but without sufficient stations and stock, it is foolish to expect that the contract can be satisfactorily filled be the contractor ever so willing."(1)

An idea of the quantity of mail sent out from Edmonton in those early days may be had from the following comments: "Over five hundred letters were sent from the Edmonton office by last mail of which four hundred were for Winnipeg and points east and the balance for places in the Territories." (2) This would be a mere bagatelle in present days but was deemed of sufficient importance to be mentioned fifty years ago. The length of time it took a letter

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, November 19th,1881.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, January 28th,1882.

to come from the province of Quebec to Edmonton in the early '80's is thus shown: "A letter was received by this mail from Montreal twenty-nine days out", and the terse editorial comment,"not too bad considering".(1)

From time to time various attempts were made by the settlement to get better service. In February,1882, a petition to which one hundred names were attached was sent down by mail asking for a weekly mail service between Winnipeg and Edmonton. Similar petitions were sent at the same time from St. Albert and Fort Saskatchewan. Evidenty the petitions fell on deaf ears for there was no result. In October of the same year, another attempt was made-"Sub-contractor,Ballendine, and others interviewed the Post-Office Inspector and Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney at the end of the track and put forth a strong plea for a weekly mail at least to Battleford and Prince Albert but to no avail. The Prince Albert settlement then despatched C. Mair with another petition to interview Sir John in the matter."(2)

The Sinclair-McLane mail and express contract between Edmonton and Winnipeg was to terminate on July 1st,1883. The people of Edmonton hoped that it would be replaced by a service coming via the Canadian Pacific Railway to Calgary and

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, December 20th,1880.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, October 21st,1882.

that from that point a weekly service would be established to Edmonton. Such a change would greatly improve the service, the difference in distance from rail head being two hundred miles as against nine hundred miles by the old line from Winnipeg. The country between Edmonton and Calgary was then almost uninhabited. During the summer of 1883, two stage lines started to operate between Edmonton and Calgary- the Royal Mail Passenger Express, McPherson and Coleman, proprietors, making fortnightly trips, and the Edmonton and Calgary stage, owned by D. McLeod, making a weekly run between these two points. Both these lines carried mail for a short time- "Pending the letting of a mail contract for this route both lines will carry letters free."(1) On October 17th, 1883, the final consignment of mail from the East on the Sinclair and McLane contract arrived in Edmonton. It had come from Winnipeg via Calgary, the trip from the latter place to Edmonton occupying five days. The mail was finally taken over by the stages between Calgary and Edmonton and the stage route was used until the inauguration of the Calgary and Edmonton train service in 1891.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, August 4th, 1883.

CHAPTER VI

The Beginnings of Education

From time to time prior to 1881 schools had been held in the Edmonton settlement, conducted either by private enterprise or by church missions. These flourished for a time and then for various reasons ceased to be and the youth of Edmonton was left to its own devices. As early as 1840, the Reverend Robert Rundle, who was the first Methodist clergyman to come into the country, which is now the province of Alberta, to do missionary work on behalf of his church, made Fort Edmonton his headquarters for a time and during his periods of residence there held school twice a day in one of the Fort buildings. Father Lacombe, on his return from a trip to St. Boniface in 1862, brought with him a young priest, Brother Scollen, who conducted school in the Fort, which was attended by the children of the Hudson's Bay Company's men to the number of about twenty. Ten years later, in 1873, there is a record of a school being taught in Edmonton by Dr. George Verey who was also the first medical man of the settlement. He came in the summer of that year and served as a clerk in the Hudson's Bay Company until the spring of 1874, when he started a school, which was continued until the following summer. This school was conducted part of the time in Reverend George McDougall's house, lent for the purpose,

and part of the time in the Fort. The expenses in connection with this venture, the teacher's salary,etc., were met jointly by several men in the vicinity of Edmonton and by the Wesleyan church. Dr. Verey seemed to be of a roving,restless disposition and several times left Edmonton for the Red River settlement,but after a brief sojourn he again found his way back. He appears to have held school again in the winter of 1877, then wandered off, and reappeared in the settlement in the spring of 1879,when "having made up his mind to stay he built a house and started to improve a little farm on the flat adjoining the Hudson's Bay property and as the population was not large enough or was too healthy to keep him in regular practice he again opened a school which he continued for about a year when he gave it up and devoted his time to his little farm, his medical practice and his duties as justice of the peace for the territories."(1) Though the young people of the community were again without instruction for a time, the near-by settlement of St. Albert was more fortunate in this regard. There a new school building had been erected by the Roman Catholic Mission and a school started with an attendance of fourteen boarders,boys and girls. The tuition, for which the fee was $100 a year, was in charge of Reverend Sisters Genevieve and Blanchette,instruction in English being given by the former and in French by the latter.(2)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 6th,1881.

(2) Ibid.,October 29th,1881.

The influx of settlers to the Edmonton district in the opening of the '80's made it necessary that some steps be taken to meet the educational needs of the growing community. Some leading citizens decided that the time was ripe to have a permanent school for the settlement. Governor Laird was written to in July,1881, with respect to government aid for schools and as time went on and nothing further was heard from him on the subject, the citizens themselves resolved to take action. At this time,the Hudson's Bay Company,having surveyed their reserve, were preparing to put lots on the market for sale and their land agent, Mr. R.S.McGinn,announced that lots would be given free for church and school purposes. Two lots were made available as a gift for a school ,the two adjacent thereto being open to purchase by the school authorities.(1) With regard to the type of school the settlement generally favoured one supported by the public and free to all. It was felt that a free school would be an inducement to intending settlers.

A meeting of the citizens was held at Ross's hotel on Tuesday evening, October 25th,1881, Chairman,R. Bourne, Secretary, John A. McDougall, for the purpose of electing school trustees who would be empowered to select a school site from the lots offered by the Hudson's Bay Company and to proceed with the erection of

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, October 29th,1881.

a school house. The trustees selected at this meeting were: Mr. W. Bowland for the eastern, Mr. M. McCauley for the central and Mr. M. Groat for the western section of the settlement. These officials were given the authority to decide what type of building would best meet the needs of the community and to call for tenders for its erection. The trustees immediately proceeded to carry out the tasks entrusted to them and the canvass for subscriptions among the citizens was got briskly under way. They also advertised for tenders in the Edmonton Bulletin of October 29th,1881. The specifications required the erection on lots 81, 82, 83 and 84, range 4, of a frame building twenty-four feet by thirty feet with twelve foot walls ,a porch, balloon frame, inside walls and ceiling dressed, outside walls dressed boards and battens, walls to be filled with sawdust well rammed down, brick chimney, one double door, six windows, to be fitted inside with teacher's desk, twelve forms four feet long and twelve desks four feet long, the building to be completed and ready for occupation on January 1st, 1882. Four tenders were received- $1,240, $1,225, $1,201 and $998.

A public meeting on school matters was held in Mr. M. McCauley's house on Friday evening, November 5th,1881,for the purpose of considering the tenders and to decide what further action should be

taken. As the meeting had been called on short notice,because the trustees felt that the lateness of the season made immediate action imperative ,the attendance was disappointingly small, only five being present besides the trustees. "Considerable diffidence was felt by those present as to taking action on account of the smallness of the meeting and the fact that the subscription lists which had been sent out the Big Lake road for signature had not yet been returned. On Mr. McCrae assuring those present that to his own personal knowledge there would be $600 subscribed a meeting was organized by the election of Mr. John Cameron as chairman. The different tenders were then read and it was decided that Oliver and McDonald's tender for $998,exclusive of chimney, be accepted, if the trustees could make suitable arrangments for the raising and paying of the money. It was moved and carried that the trustees be empowered to negotiate a loan of $500 in addition to the subscriptions to be used for school purposes and to arrange the details of such loan. Also,that the trustees be authorized to arrange a price at which lumber, etc. will be accepted as payment for the construction of the school house and collect or appoint a collector to collect all sums subscribed for the purpose."(1)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, November 12th,1881.

Mr. McCauley then explained that it had been possible to get only four lots together in a suitable place and as these were deemed sufficient no more were purchased. Mr. McGinn had made application for the grant of these two extra lots in addition to the two originally donated by the Hudson's Bay Company.(1)

The canvass for subscriptions met with a gratifying response; the sum collected and promised totaled $600, a considerable amount considering the smallness of the settlement and the limited resources of most of the citizens. The construction of the school progressed rapidly and it was announced ready for occupation on Monday,December 12th,1881.

The next matter of moment was the appointment of a teacher. For this purpose a school meeting was held on Tuesday, December 6th, with Mr. Hardisty as chairman. Mr. M. McCauley,representing the trustees, explained that the object of the meeting was to hire a teacher or give the trustees power to do so and to take what action might be necessary to further the interests of the school. The Rev. Mr. Baird and Mr. R. Hardisty were appointed by the meeting to assist these officials in the selection of a teacher from among the three applicants whose names were in their possession. The terms of salary and

(I) The lots on which the first Edmonton public school was built are where the McKay avenue school now stands.

the period of engagement were left to the discretion of the trustees. The chairman produced a document signed by a number of residents of the settlement, guaranteeing the salary of the teacher. It read as follows: "We the undersigned do hereby agree to become liable--to a majority of our number--equally in the sum of $500 to be paid to a teacher of a school at Edmonton for one year's service. Provided that after the application to that purpose of any government grant that may be obtained and any monies otherwise subscribed that it be necessary for us to pay such sum and should monies be raised by either of the above mentioned means we will severally pay an equal portion of the amount requisite to complete the $500. And provided that the location of the school and the teacher therein be deemed satisfactory by a majority of our number and that ten persons do subscribe hereto-

"Witness our hands:

R. Hardisty	John A. McDougall
John Cameron	John Norris
Donald McLeod	Charles Stewart
J.A.MaCrae	Kenneth MacDonald
R. Logan	M.A.Groat "(1)

A few days later, at the school trustees' meeting, it was decided to engage the services of Mr. J. Harris as teacher at a salary of $50 a month.

When the key of the school house were handed over to the trustees,there was still a debt of $396 borrowed in lumber on one year's time. Of the subscriptions $325 had been collected in cash and the outstanding balance was advanced for the time being by Messrs.Hardisty and Fraser.

The school was now off to a good start--"The public school had been running now nearly two weeks with an attendance

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, December 10th,1881.

of from twenty-five to thirty-two of whom only three are girls. The building has been quite comfortable so far, although it is not banked and the children are making fair progress. The scarcity of school books is a slight drawback at present as also that of white chalk for the blackboard but these wants will be supplied in a short time."(1) Provision was made for heating the school-house for the winter by renting for $10 a stove from Hardisty and Fraser's mill and the wood for fuel was to be supplied voluntarily by parents sending their children to school and other generous-minded citizens. When fuel for heating purposes was required an appeal was made through the medium of the Bulletin- "Parties sending their children to school will please take notice that there is need for a few loads of dry wood."(2) After the school had been in operation for about six weeks, Mr. Harris, the teacher, took ill and the school had to be closed. Due to his prolonged illness a month went by before studies could be resumed under a substitute teacher, Mr. Langrell. Mr. Harris's health gradually became worse and he succumbed towards the end of March. Mr. W. Stiff then taught the school for a while during 1883 and was succeeded

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, January 14th,1882.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, November 11th,1882.

by Mr. R. Secord.

Towards the end of the year 1881 a commercial school had been opened at St. Albert Mission where courses in mathematics and book-keeping were offered under the instruction of Rev. Father Leduc. The fee asked, which included tuition, board and lodging, was $150. (1)

The new community enterprise of Edmonton occasionally found itself faced with difficulties. The teacher's salary frequently got several months in arrears and there was an appeal to the citizens for funds. By March 1882 the teacher's salary had not been paid for six months. Whether the pedagogue had other means of subsistence is not learned. The need for fuel for heating purposes was incessant. Early in December ,1882, school was suspended for the want of a stove because the one in use, being the property of the Hudson's Bay Company,was required for their own needs. The Masonic Lodge, however, came to the rescue and loaned their stove so classes were resumed once more. (2)

Some of the more responsible citizens of the community felt that this rather haphazard method of dealing with school affairs could not go on and that matters in connection therewith would have to be put on a more satisfactory business basis. Edmonton

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, December 17th,1881.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, November 25th and December 6th,1882.

had been the first settlement in the Territories to organize a public school and because no legal provision had yet been made for an educational system, the school had necessarily been supported by voluntary subscription. That this was a temporary expedient and that the school, which was the business of the entire community, should in time be put on a proper legal footing, each resident bearing his equitable share, had always been recognized. The burden had been unequally borne by a few citizens, some of whom had no children attending school and it could hardly be expected that voluntary subscriptions could be kept up indefinitely. Popular subscriptions for public purposes were all right when the place was small but with the increase in population it became impossible. There was no guarantee of continuous adequate support to meet the expenses of the school, which were continually getting in arrears. A meeting was accordingly held in the school room on Tuesday evening, December 19th, 1882, to discuss the question of whether it would not be possible to organize some sort of municipal government through which all residents of the settlement would be assessed for the support of the school, not leaving it to the uncertain method of voluntary subscription. It was decided to establish a school section and "to lay a tax on the property within the section to the amount of $400 a year, the amount necessary for the running of the school."(1)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, December 23rd, 1882.

The boundaries of the proposed school section were outlined as "to comprise all the river settlement on the south side from J.McKernan's on the east to R. McKernan's on the west; the St. Albert road settlement to include D. Noyes's farm; eastward to include the settlers on Rat Creek; and north to include Sanderson and Looby's claim. To this end a committee was appointed to ascertain from the different householders whether they were in favour of paying on a pro rata assessment."(1) Having thus formulated their plans and taken this preliminary step it was found necessary to postpone a further move until empowered by legislation.

After the passing of School and Municipal Ordinances at the sixth session of the Council of the North-West Territories in July-August,1884,which provided for the formation of school districts having the power to levy taxes for school purposes, steps were taken in the Edmonton settlement to organize a school district. In the November 15th,1884,issue of the Edmonton Bulletin the following notice appeared, signed by Mr. M. McCauley,returning officer, D. Ross and M. Groat,school committee,- "All parties are hereby notified that the undersigned committee have petitioned the Lieutenant-Governor for the erection of the Edmonton Protestant public school district within the following limits ..... all of it being on the north side of the north Saskatchewan River and comprising

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, December 23rd,1882.

the village of Edmonton and call for a vote of the school electors within the limits to decide whether such a petition shall be granted or not to be given on Saturday,20th December,1884. Votes will be received at the public school,Edmonton, from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m..... Qualification of voters-- owners of land of the value of $100 or, if a tenant, the yearly value of $20 within the limits of the proposed school district.....of the full age of twenty-one years, not an alien or an unenfranchised Indian."

Strange to say there was not unanimity of opinion in the settlement with regard to the change, when the question of the organization of a school district came up. A strong feeling antagonistic to the proposed school district developed and a very energetic canvass was carried on in the community both for and against the scheme: the point in dispute being whether it was a better way to provide funds by public subscription, as heretofore,or by assessment on property, which would be the method, if a school district were formed. The Hudson's Bay Company, which owned a good deal of the taxable property in the district area, strongly opposed the scheme and some of the oldest settlers feared the taxes would be a burden and were of the opinion that,as the school had done very well so far, it would be a good plan to let well enough alone. The Hudson's Bay Company electioneered vigorously against the move and influenced as many as it could to take an adverse stand by telling them that even their flour,cook-stoves and provisions were liable to be taxed, if the new scheme went through.

The eventful voting day arrived and the contest bid fair to be a hot one. No effort was spared by either party to gain the victory. The Hudson's Bay Company had brought in from Slave Lake, Athabaska Landing and other places those of their officers who had votes. "To see that order was preserved,Sergeant Geldert of the police had been requested to attend by Mr. McDougall of the Hudson's Bay Company and two special constables were sworn in besides. Before nine o'clock teams were on the street to bring up the voters. At the hour appointed Mr. M. McCauley,the returning officer,opened the poll book and proceeded to record the votes cast. Mr. W. S. Robertson for the school and Mr. G. A. Watson for the anti-school party acted as scrutineers. The first batch of votes were polled by the antis but these were soon balanced by the arrival of a sleigh-load of those favouring the scheme and from that time forward until three o'clock neither party gained much on the other. At noon the vote stood thirty-seven for to thirty-four against. At one o'clock matters began to get red hot. The teams were whipped up at a livelier rate and both parties made up their minds to win or bust. The school party gradually forged ahead and about two o'clock the resources of their opponents were supposed to be exhausted. Not so,however, as a detachment of Hudson's Bay Company's employees, who were not generally known to have votes, arrived on the scene and put the anti-school party some five or six votes ahead. The men voted as tenants of rooms in the Hudson's Bay Fort. As a counter move to this attack the school party replied. Donald Ross of the Edmonton

hotel brought up a number of his boarders who also voted on the rooms occupied by them, both parties swallowing the cast iron oath like little men."(1) The story was told years afterwards by Mr. McCauley that among Donald Ross's boarders there was but one coon-skin coat. One of them would go to the poll,vote and then go back and give the coat to the next man. "Every time I saw the coon-skin coat coming," said Mr. McCauley, "I knew it was another vote for the school."(2)

The votes were cast in three languages,English,French and Gaelic,interpreters being required in the two latter languages. A very large minority spoke Cree, the language of the country, as well as one or more of the others mentioned, while several were able to converse fluently in all. "One man on being asked by the returning officer which he wished to vote for-- it was an open ballot--replied, 'Richard Hardisty' . Hardisty was then the Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company. Upon being asked again he gave the same answer. Mr. McCauley therefore rightly disallowed his vote, although,of course, he knew all the time that the man wished to vote against the school. Another man, a Highland

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, December 27th,1884.

(2) MacEachran,J.M.,History of Education in Alberta, an article in Canada and Its Provinces,Toronto, 1914, v XX, p 482.

Scotchman,upon hearing the oath,muttered as he heard the words- 'that you are of age and not an Indian'- 'My God! an Indian! an' me a Hielandman of the first water.' He refused to vote, he was so disgusted."(1)

"At four o'clock the poll was declared closed just as an anti-school voter arrived at the door. Of course,this called forth cheers from the school party and some warm words passed but nothing more serious occurred. The returning officer and scrutineers counted up the votes and announced as the result fifty-four for and forty-three against the organization of the school district. The result was received with loud cheers by the voters."(2)

While excitement ran high order was preserved and there was no disturbance of any kind during the day. There had been a threat that the poll books would be destroyed but this did not materialize. When the poll was closed and the results known, many of the adherents of both sides vented their indignation and anger in violent arguments and free for all fights, resulting in bruises and black eyes which their recipients carried for many days.

A recount was held on the Tuesday following the election. Contrary to expectations no objection was raised to the method of conducting the voting or to the legality of the votes

(1) MacEachran,J.M., History of Education in Alberta, an article in Canada and Its Provinces,Toronto, 1914, v XX, p 482.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, December 27th,1884.

cast. "It was felt by the opposition that the school would still have a majority, even if some of the votes considered illegal were disallowed, and so it was thought well to leave the matter as it stood. As no complaints were made the votes cast were summed up with the result before given and the return certifying the election was made up by the magistrates to be forwarded to the Lieutenant-Governor."(1)

It is interesting to note the absence of pronounced religious feeling in the district in those days. "Although it was a Protestant district that was being erected,Roman Catholics were found working and voting for it as heartily as Protestants."(2)

Owing to certain tactics of the opposition,the petition for the organization of the school district was delayed in being sent for nearly a year, the opposition being finally overcome by a slight juggling of boundaries. The Edmonton school district instead then of being the first to be organized in the Territories was the seventh.

The newly elected trustees of the organized school district assumed the outstanding financial obligation of the "old school" and proceeded to put educational matters on a sound basis.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, December 27th,1884.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin,December 27th,1884.

CHAPTER VII

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

Travelling in the early days, when Fort Edmonton was a trading post, was confined largely to the despatch of the annual brigade in the spring with the winter's catch of furs brought by the Indians and half-breed trappers and the return of the brigade in the fall with the year's supplies. It was the custom for the Chief Factor to go down with the spring brigade to the annual meeting of the Council at Norway House. The Saskatchewan River was the great highway of transportation from Edmonton at the head of navigation to Norway House on Lake Winnipeg, thence via the Nelson River to York Factory, the great port on Hudson Bay.

In the very early days, canoes were used by the intrepid voyageurs of both the North-West Company and the Company of Gentlemen Adventurers Trading into Hudson's Bay. The canoe then gave place to the York boat with its crew of sturdy oarsmen and its single mast with square sail. It was infinitely harder to propel than the light and swiftly moving canoe but could transport a much greater quantity of goods, which in the eyes of the Company was a preponderating element in its favour. It is difficult to fix the exact date when the change from canoe to boat was made. It is recorded that at a meeting of the Council of Rupert's Land in 1823 the policy of adding York boats as a means of

transportation was adopted. These boats were from twenty-eight to thirty feet long, manned by a steersman and eight men and they carried from eighty to one hundred inland pieces , that is packs of ninety pounds each. Apparently, the dimensions and carrying capacity were regulated by the Council of Rupert's Land for according to the minutes of the Council of the year 1836,it was set down that the minium length of York boats should be twenty-eight feet long and their minimum carrying capacity should be eighty pieces. The reason for the uniform weight of pieces containing goods or fur was to ensure greater facility in their transportation over the many portages of varying distance along the route and in the unloading and reloading which was necessary at every portage. One man generally carried two packs and it was the proud boast of many a sturdy voyageur that he could traverse even the long portages without setting his packs down on the way. On the return journey along the Saskatchewan route these heavy York boats had to be hauled upstream against the current and rapids by groups of men with a tow line,relieving each other every few hours. This toilsome task is vividly described by Father Lacombe, who, on coming into the country in 1852, was a passenger in Chief Factor Rowand's boat from Cumberland House to Edmonton, when the latter was returning with the boat brigade from his annual official

visit to Norway House. "On the journey there were about eighty men engaged in hauling the ten York boats up the river. At night the boatmen camped à la belle étoile but with no eyes for the beauty of the night after their slavish toil in the leather harness all day. Daylight lingers long on the Saskatchewan and it was used to the full on these trips ..... this then was the reality of life for the dashing voyageurs who had left Quebec parishes with such fine hopes of western freedom! The canoes had been done away with, the drudgery of these stout capacious boats was their lot. 'Faugh! it was to be as slaves in Africa', he said to himself, and even after fifty years had passed Father Lacombe spoke of the tracking of mid-century days as a painful memory."(1)

The boat-men lived on pounded pemmican and water: they rarely knew the luxury of tea, but the factor and his clerks had better and choicer fare. Of the boatman's life,Father Lacombe has told-"Imagine, if you please after resting a few hours on the bare earth to hear at three o'clock the cry, Lève, Lève! et puis, hurrah- to pull and pull on the lines drawing the heavy

(1) Hughes,Katherine, Father Lacombe, New York, 1914, p 41.

boat up against the current walking in the mud and rocks and swamp, along cliffs and sometimes in water up to their arm-pits and this under burning sun or beating rain until darkness fell about nine o'clock. Without having seen it, one can form no idea of the hardships and cruel fatigues of the boatmen."(1)

Though accompanying the brigade along the Saskatchewan River was the main method of travelling in and out of the country in the early days, comparatively short distances,such as a trip from one post to another, were covered sometimes by the Company's men or the occasional traveller on horseback or by canoe in summer and by dog-team in winter. This last manner of winter travelling has been described in considerable detail by some early visitors to Fort Edmonton.

From the pen of the Canadian artist,Paul Kane, one gets an excellent description of a trip by dog-team and cariole in winter. Kane had spent the winter of 1847-48 at Fort Edmonton and while at the post in January of the year 1848 had attended the wedding of Mr. Rowand,Jr. to the daughter of Mr. Harriott, then in charge of the Fort. As he had planned to make a trip eastward about that time, the artist was invited to accompany the bridal couple on their journey home to Fort Pitt,a distance

(1) Hughes, Katherine,Father Lacombe, New York, 1914, p 41ff.

of two hundred miles. It being the festive occasion of a wedding journey, the travelling accoutrements were perhaps a little more elaborate than usual. Kane described them thus: "The party consisted of Mr. Rowand and his bride with nine men. We had three carioles and six sledges with four dogs to each, forming when en route a long and picturesque cavalcade: all the dogs gaudily decorated with saddle-cloths of various colours, fringed and embroidered in the most fantastic manner with innumerable small bells and feathers producing altogether a pleasing and enlivening effect. Our carioles were also handsomely decorated ,the bride's more particularly which had been made expressly for the occasion and was elaborately painted and ornamented and was drawn by a set of dogs recently imported from Lower Canada by Mr. Rowand. The cariole is intended for one person only; it is a thin flat board about eighteen inches wide, bent up in front, with a straight back behind to lean against; the sides are made of green buffalo hide with the hair scraped completely off and dried resembling thick parchment; this entirely covers the front part, so that a person slips into it as into a tin bath.

"We started as the day dawned, the dogs running at a furious rate, as they invariably do at first starting and require all the strength and agility of the men to keep the sledges and carioles from

upsetting,which they manage to do as well as they can by holding on to a cord attached to each side from behind. Two men go before on the run on snow-shoes to beat a track; which the dogs instinctively follow: these men are relieved every two hours, as it is very laborious. The dogs generally used are of a breed peculiar to the country, and partake largely of the character and disposition of the wolf which they often so resemble in appearance as sometimes to have been shot in mistake. Their ferocity is often so great that they are dangerous.

"Immediately on leaving the fort,we got on the ice of the Saskatchewan River and travelled down it all day,having in true voyageur style,trusted to our prowess as hunters for a supply of food on our journey although of two hundred miles; having literally brought nothing with us but our kettles we were unable to break our fast until we had killed a fat cow, which was soon demolished by ourselves and the dogs.

"The spirit thermometer stood this morning,(January 10th) at forty-seven degrees below zero Fahrenheit. Finding it impossible to keep myself warm in my cariole, in spite of skins and blankets, I put on a pair of snow-shoes and walked all day. The snow was three feet deep on an average and was drifted by the wind with such violence in our faces as to nearly blind us; notwithstanding which our guides seemed to find no difficulty in pursuing their course-- such is the instinctive faculty of these men in tracing their way over this trackless desert, where not a stick nor a shrub is to be met

with to guide them ..... " (1)

More information with regard to dog-team travelling and, particularly,detail with respect to the construction of the cariole, harness accessories, etc., is to be had from the Journal of Dr. Hector of the Palliser Expedition. While at Fort Carleton during November of 1857, this traveller had his first experience with a dog-team and greatly enjoyed the short outing- "Went out with Hardisty dog-driving for the first time and found it delightful. We had four dogs dragging a light sleigh or "sled", as it is always called, made of two birch planks lashed together by cross bars and turned up at the point; the whole shaped like a Norwegian snow-shoe, but ten feet long and fourteen inches wide. As the dogs were fresh and had no load they went very fast, sometimes we ran behind time about and when out of breath would jump on for a ride, a feat not very easily accomplished for a beginner, for, the least unsteadiness in planting your feet on the sled caused it to dodge from under you. A fall headlong among the deep snow on the side of the track was the general consequence, followed by a frantic race to make up with the dogs again, who of course had made off with redoubled speed."(2)

(1) Kane,Paul, Wanderings of an Artist Among the Indians of North America,London, 1859, pp 385-90.

(2) Palliser's Journal, p 66.

Dr. Hector elaborated further on this method of travelling on the occasion of his setting out from the Carleton post for a trip to Fort Edmonton in December of the same year— "The arrangements are nearly completed for my start now, Hardisty having kindly fitted me up a jolly little cariole that will either do for passenger or goods' traffic. This cariole is only a sled with parchment sides sustained on cords that pass over a back-board standing about a foot from the end; it resembles much a coffin-shaped slipper bath. The harness consists of a collar made of an iron ring with a pad on it, which passes tightly over the dog's head, but fits his shoulders well; to this are attached two long straps of dressed hide,kept up by a band across the dogs back; to the collar and back-band are generally attached rows of bells, the merry jingle of which enlivens the journey, and gives spirit both to the dogs and drivers. Favourite trains of dogs are dressed up in very jaunty style,with ribbons and brightly coloured saddle cloths. Four dogs are attached to each sled and they are driven solely by the voice, no reins are used. On a river where there is no decided track it is of course a difficult matter to keep them straight, and then a man generally runs before whom they follow; but in a track where other sleds have passed or where snow-shoes have been used, there is no difficulty in driving them, as they never have any wish to turn aside in the soft deep snow that is on either hand. Where snow-shoes have been used,or where a dog sled or train as the whole turn-out is called has passed

over the snow the track hardens so as to remain all winter and even where more snow falls, always affording a hard regular bottom much easier to travel upon than it is to beat a fresh track. Some of the dogs are wonderfully sagacious in discovering and keeping on old tracks so alive are they to the additional ease it gives them in dragging their load."(1)

In the course of time, the progress of events changed the line of communication from the Company's headquarters in London. York Factory on Hudson's Bay no longer was the port of call for the shipping in of the Company's supplies to its posts in the West. In the late '50's and early '60's railways had reached St. Paul and the Company made Fort Garry the base of their supplies instead of York Factory. In 1850, a line of communication by pony and ox-cart was opened up between St. Paul and Fort Garry and the latter became the distributing centre. As a highway of communication the water-way gave place to the cart trail and the Red River cart became the vehicle of transportation for supplies and travellers. The old Indian trails were the routes followed across the prairies.

The famous Red River carts were built by the half-breeds of oak,(2) entirely without nails and no iron entered into their

(1) Palliser's Journal, p 66ff.

(2) The oak was obtained from the southern part of Manitoba, as there was none in Alberta.

construction. The two wheels were without tires and an extra axle was lashed beneath the cart by shaganappi (raw hide). No axle grease was used because experience had taught that the fine dust along the prairie trails lodged in the grease and wore down the axles and hubs, in consequence the creaking of these carts could be heard as far away as they could be seen. An ox could draw half a ton fifteen miles per day in these carts. The wheels were of "dish" shape which was an advantage in travelling along uneven or slippery roads and in preventing the carts from toppling over. There were no bridges over the rivers and streams and when the water was too deep to ford successfully the driver improvised a boat by removing the wheels of his cart,lashing them together underneath the cart and fastening a buffalo skin or canvas over them. In this apparently unseaworthy craft the other shore was reached and in an unconcerned manner the journey was resumed, the operation to be repeated again, if necessary, at the next river.

As has been previously stated,Father Lacombe,on his return journey from a visit to his bishop at St. Boniface,brought into the Edmonton district in 1862 the first train of Red River carts to cross the prairie with freight from the Red River. At that period all the good available in the country were brought in by the Hudson's Bay Company up the Saskatchewan by means of York boats. They had the monopoly and freight rates were very high. To avoid paying these excessive rates on the supplies for his mission

the astute Father conceived the idea of securing a brigade of Red River carts for his return journey, thus forestalling the Company. For five years the Hudson's Bay Company still persisted in its old conservative method of transportation by York boat. In 1867, the change was made to carts for bringing in freight and these were used until the Company began to operate steamboats on the Saskatchewan River.

Miss Katherine Hughes gives Father Lacombe's own account of the Company's change of policy:- "On August 13th, 1867, there appeared at St. Paul des Cris the first brigade of carts brought out over the prairies from St. Boniface by the Company. There were eighty-two carts -- a showing which quite eclipsed Father Lacombe's modest pioneer brigade of 1862. The big company was five years behind the missionary in adopting this method of transportation but like all strong and conservative forces, when it made the change it did so with éclat. Eighty-two carts! To the wide-eyed natives of St. Paul the sight was as awe-inspiring as the steam horse and iron road were to be some years later. And as though this were not in itself sufficiently wonderful -- ten days later there

came creaking and groaning up the trail a second brigade of thirty-two carts belonging to the Company."(1)

The carts revolutionized the mode of travelling and freighting and broke the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company as purveyor of supplies. Carts could now wander at will all over the prairies and make their own trails. Independent traders began to bring in freight as well as those who freighted for the Company. This was particularly the case after the Hudson's Bay Company had relinquished its charter and Prince Rupert's Land had become part of Canada and open for settlement. In 1870, venturesome traders with furs successfully made their way through the Blackfoot country for the first time to trade with the out-posts established from Fort Benton on the Missouri by the I.G.Baker Company. This route later became an established one for the freighting in of supplies.

The steamboats which the Company installed on the river in the middle '70's were for their own use mainly and not so much for the public at large. The boats ,of course, could be used only part of the year and the Company still maintained a large force of men at work freighting by cart. The independent traders used carts entirely.(2) The greater proportion of the freight

(1) Hughes,Katherine, Father Lacombe, New York, 1914, p 137.

(2) Based on information given to the writer personally by the Hon. Frank Oliver,August,1931.

therefore was brought in by ox-cart and as the settlement grew, as it did rather rapidly in the land rush days of 1881 and 1882, there was need for great quantities of supplies.

It was an amazing amount of freight that came by ox-cart eight hundred miles across the prairies during the early '80's. In our day merchants advertise their shipments of goods as arriving in carload lots; fifty years ago, Edmonton's first newspaper contained such advertisements as these: "Villiers and Pearson.....carts arriving every week." P. Heiminck's advertisement read- "Groceries,boots and shoes to arrive by McPherson's train of carts." At times supplies ran low as evidenced by an item in one of the Bulletin issues of that day- "In the past year goods of all kinds even the most necessary articles were scarce at certain times but as over three hundred carts have arrived for private traders,besides four steamboat loads for the Hudson's Bay Company, it is likely there will be a full supply."(1) The Hudson's Bay Company's establishment in the fort was the supply depot for their northern posts so that all the supplies they brought in were not for the settlement but a greater part of them were

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, October 29th,1881.

shipped to posts in the North. Sometimes, the steamers brought freight part way up the river to Fort Pitt and other places and it was then freighted overland by cart. Not only was freight brought across the prairies from Winnipeg but also from another distributing centre, Fort Benton on the Missouri, via Fort McLeod, where a large concern, the I. G. Baker Company, did a flourishing business.

The small trader from the point of view of the Company was negligible but the trader who did business on a fairly large scale was looked upon with an unfriendly eye as a serious rival. Some of Edmonton's pioneer citizens were traders, when they first arrived in the country. The Honourable Frank Oliver,proprietor of Edmonton's first newspaper, was a trader in a small way, when he first came to the settlement, while the late Mr. John A. McDougall, one of Edmonton's pioneer merchants, went into trading on quite an extensive scale.

"A trip across the prairie from Winnipeg to Edmonton with loaded carts took three months," said Hon. Frank Oliver,who came in 1876, "but if one made a fast trip it could be done in two months and a really fast trip by horse and buckboard, one month. Each summer was practically occupied in providing for the following winter. Freight cost ten cents a pound. Stocks of goods could only be turned over once a year, consequently,prices were high. Flour was cheap at $15 per hundred pounds and sometimes cost $25. A two hundred pound barrel of

salt, the initial cost of which would be perhaps a dollar, would have its value increased to $20 or $30 by the time it reached its journey's end by cart."(1)

It may be noted that the travel by buckboard which Mr. Oliver mentions made its first appearance in Manitoba and the North-West in 1868. The party, composed of people mostly from the banks of the Mississippi, which the Reverend George McDougall brought back from the East in the autumn of 1868, introduced the first vehicle of this kind-- "Hitherto, the Red River cart had reigned supreme but now the light and easy-riding buckboard came to conquer and with base ingratitude the cart was relegated to the plebeian work of freighting only. No more of the dangling of one's legs over the front bar of this wooden coach; good-bye forever to the dulcet tones of the squeaking axles and shrieking unbushed hubs..... Even as a palace pullman coach is to a loaded flat-car, so is the buckboard to an honest Red River cart."(2)

Another pioneer trader of the '70's was the late John A. McDougall, who reached Edmonton in 1876. He, like Mr. Oliver, afterwards became a merchant. He had been first attracted to the North-West by reading Sir William Butler's book, "The Great Lone Land" which had aroused considerable interest in eastern Canada in the vast tract of country so lately incorporated into the Dominion.

(1) Information given personally to the writer by the Honourable Frank Oliver, August, 1931.

(2) McDougall, John, In the Days of the Red River Rebellion, Toronto, 1903, p 12ff.

Mr. McDougall began the long and difficult journey over the prairies by ox-cart as did the pioneers of those days. In a speech at the opening of the Old-Timers Log Cabin, Edmonton Exhibition Grounds,July,1926, Mr. McDougall let his thoughts turn back to the early days.

"Travelling in those days was slow and tedious," he said, "and the trip between Fort Garry and here generally took from two to three months to make with loaded carts, travelling slowly day after day with a string of old Red River carts, now a historic memory only-each loaded with about eight hundred pounds of supplies of all kinds and hauled by an ox hitched in between heavy shafts to which the animal was fastened by short tugs with a strong iron pin at the end of them which fitted into a hole bored through and near the end of the shaft. Sometimes each animal was tied by a rope to the tail end of the cart ahead but not always. One man would drive and look after four or five carts, walking alongside. Generally,the owner of the outfit led the brigade of fifteen or twenty carts in a spring buckboard or a light canvas covered wagon and this was hauled by one horse.

"We made from fifteen to twenty miles a day according to the condition of the roads. If it was a wet season, we were often stuck in mud holes in trying to get across bad places. Then we had to get in the mud or wet muskeg

often up to our knees and put our shoulder to the wheel in dead earnest and push for all we were worth to help the poor animal get out. Sometimes the ox or pony would get discouraged, balk and lie down in the mud: then it was bad. Sometimes we had to lay up all day on account of rain. Then, we had a chance to wash and mend things and make necessary repairs after which the half-breed boys would get out their fiddles or concertinas and have some music. Again, we were sometimes delayed on account of a broken axle; then we would have to unload the cart, turn it upside down, get out the drawing knife and fit in a new axle. This would delay us for fully half a day. We often had to travel at night to reach a good camping place, where we could find wood, water and feed for the animals. When we got there we would generally be tired out and after getting our supper, putting up the tent and looking after the animals, hobbling those that were likely to stray away, we lost no time in getting to bed and would soon fall asleep, dreaming dreams of the future. Often we would be too tired to put up the tents, then we would sleep under the carts,if there was no sign of rain and fall asleep, watching the stars overhead. The absolute stillness was occasionally broken by the howl of coyotes or the swift flights of flocks of wild geese and wild ducks flying overhead. We met an occasional trader going down to Winnipeg, loaded with

buffalo robes and furs to sell and to bring back another outfit for the winter's trade. We met no settlers and saw no Indians, except around some Hudson's Bay post. Out on the plains away south-east of this the Indians and half-breeds were still hunting the buffalo,but they were getting scarce." (1)

Attracted by the prospect that Edmonton would be on a railway line, due to the fact that preliminary surveys for the line had gone through the Yellowhead Pass, many settlers came in in the early '80's. The Honourable Frank Oliver, who was then a trader, brought his young bride of seventeen here in 1881. Her honeymoon was a two months' trek across the prairies by Red River cart. "I was married on August 6th, 1881,"said Mrs. Oliver, "and reached Edmonton on October 6th. It was a wet year and streams had to be forded, with the exception of at Battleford, where there was a ferry to cross the river. Mr. Oliver had fifty Red River carts in his train and nine men to look after the freight. Dozens of land speculators passed us on the road rushing to buy up town sites. It was supposed in those days that the Canadian Pacific Railway was going through the Yellowhead Pass and that summer the Governor - General, the Marquis of Lorne, was making a trip out West to view the proposed route. One night we camped near the vice-regal party and next morning it branched off at Gabriel Dumont's

(1) Edmonton Journal, July 4th,1926.

and struck off towards Calgary and then we knew it was extremely likely that the line would go that way. There were about fifty people in Edmonton, when I arrived and I was one of the first of the small group of white women who came to the settlement at this period. The same year many people made their way over the mountains from the Cariboo."(1)

The late Reverend Dr. D. G. McQueen, on the occasion of the death of an old-timer, Thomas Henderson, a few years ago, recalled the coming of the Henderson family in 1881:

"Thomas Henderson in the summer of 1881 with his wife and six children came along the old Cariboo trail through the Yellowhead Pass from the family home on the Fraser river, thirty miles above New Westminster. He settled on a farm on the south side of the river at Edmonton. The youngest of the six children was one year old. Mrs. Henderson with this infant in her arms and the remainder of the family rode pack horses. Two little tots were placed in gunny sacks, their heads sticking out on each side of a pony: two others rode one horse and another was on a pony by herself. This family cavalcade led by Mr. Henderson was novel even for the West at that time. Two young men accompanied

(1) Information given personally to the writer by Mrs. Frank Oliver, June, 1931.

them,one of these, Thomas Stewart, another pioneer of the south side, later marrying the eldest daughter.

"While crossing the Fraser River in the mountains at one point, Mr. Henderson's horse was swept away and lost, his own life being saved by an eddy into which he was carried. The pack on the lost horse contained all the matches and the party for three weeks subsisted without a fire, eating raw oatmeal stirred in cold water. Their first cooked meal came when they reached the hospitable Roman Catholic Mission at Lac Ste. Anne, whose doors were ever open to travellers." (1)

Another old -timer to come to Edmonton in 1879 was Mr. Murdoch McLeod, an Orkney Islander by birth, who originally came to Canada as an apprentice boy with the Hudson's Bay Company. Mr. and Mrs. McLeod,their three children and Mrs. McLeod's sister (afterwards Mrs. Belcher) journeyed from Winnipeg in company with a cousin, Donald McLeod, who had charge of the annual freighting for the Company from Fort Garry to Edmonton. The two women took turns in driving the covered wagon which formed their sleeping quarters at night, while Murdoch McLeod drove the wagon which contained their supplies for a year. Nearly one hundred wagons and Red River carts formed the wagon train,

(1) From an undated clipping from the Edmonton Journal.

which wound slowly over the prairies and while there were about one hundred in the group Mrs. McLeod and her sister were the only women. Plodding along behind the wagon were two milch cows which arrived none the worse for the trip but on the last day some of the chickens,which the new comers were bringing,were frozen. On their arrival at the Fort, November 20th,1879,the party found the river frozen hard enough for them to cross the ice and they were warmly greeted by the half dozen white women here at that time.(1)

The life of the trader was no easy one. He travelled hundreds of miles over very bad roads in rain,snow and severe cold, was in danger of drowning and other accidents and of sudden sickness, miles from help. Incoming traders often brought news of those they had passed along the road. In one of the early issues of the Bulletin,which reflected the daily life of the community, one reads- "J. Gore's carts arrived on Thursday last via Fort Saskatchewan. They met J. Inkster's carts two days beyond the Vermilion. He had lost an iron-bound cart and drowned an animal in the Beaver River. They met Captain Moore a day beyond the Vermilion. He was out of flour and had only a handful of biscuits." (2) And again another item in the same issue tells its own story- "Joe Macdonald arrived from Fort Pitt on Tuesday last. He with his two boys had gone with ten carts for steamboat freight. At Fort Pitt he was

(1) Facts taken from an undated newspaper clipping in the scrap-book of Mrs. Alice McDougall Inglis, Edmonton,Alberta.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, November 5th,1881.

delayed ten days owing to ice running in the river and the difficulties of crossing in a leaky skiff. On his return trip, instead of crossing the Vermilion, he followed the trail made by Donald McLeod during the summer. He says the trail is very bad and much longer than is necessary. While in the worst part of the road one of his boys took sick of scarlet fever and as he and the remaining boy were unable to attend to the sick one and drive the ten carts, he left the carts about one hundred miles from here and came in light with the sick child,making the distance in four days, the last day being from Beaver River to here, about fifty miles. He intended to leave again yesterday, after getting his horses shod,to bring in the carts. The child is recovering." (1)

As the main line of the railroad crept across the prairie, freight was brought to the end of the track and this considerably shortened the distance that it had to be transported. By October, 1882, the track had reached Swift Current,about four hundred and fifty miles from Edmonton.

* * *

In 1862, the Hudson's Bay Company took another step forward in the march of progress. The Company began to send their goods in to railhead at St. Paul and then have it portaged to the Red River. In May of 1862, the steamer International was installed on the Red River by which means their supplies were conveyed to Fort Garry, the Company's distributing

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(1) Edmonton Bulletin, November 5th,1881.

point for the West. Shortly after the inauguration of this steamer service, trouble with the Sioux Indians caused the suspension of river traffic for a number of years. By 1871, the Company had a large steamer, the Northcote, in operation on the Saskatchewan. This boat made her initial trip to Edmonton in July, 1875, bringing supplies for the North-West Mounted Police and with her coming a new phase of the Company's activities commenced. The York boat disappeared from the river, the picturesque succumbing to the utilitarian. The route of these steamers was from Fort Garry down the Red River to Lake Winnipeg, thence northward through Lake Winnipeg to the mouth of the Saskatchewan River. At the Grand Rapids freight had to be transported across the four mile portage by a tramway which the Hudson's Bay Company had built in the early '70's. It was then loaded on other steamers and taken up the Saskatchewan. The early steamers on the Saskatchewan were all owned by the Hudson's Bay Company and for a number of years after this steamboat service was initiated they carried freight for the Company alone to supply their various posts. After 1880, the steamboat facilities of the river were open to other traders and the Company conducted a transportation business for the public in general.

With regard to the steamer service on the river the Bulletin of November 5th,1881, makes the following comment: "It is now six years since the Northcote, a large river steamer was put on by the Hudson's Bay Company and each year she has made from one to three trips from Grand Rapids to Edmonton besides short trips to points farther down the river. The Lily, a small boat, has run three seasons (from 1879) from Carleton to Edmonton. She was very liable to damage by rocks as her iron was only one eighth inches thick. So last winter she was sheeted on the bottom with two inch planks to give her additional strength but the extra weight and bulk has made her so unwieldly as to be of very little use. It is proposed to lay her up and use her engine to run a mill at Carrot River. These boats were owned and run by the Hudson's Bay Company principally for their own use and have proved beyond a doubt that the river is navigable."(1)

The steamboat-landing was at a point in the north bank which now lies under the High Level bridge.(2)

The following is a table of freight and passenger rates in force in 1880 and these were a modification of former years:

Passenger rates	Up		Down	
	Cabin	Deck	Cabin	Deck
Lower Fort Garry to Victoria, Fort Saskatchewan and Edmonton	$70	$35	$65	$32

(1) Bulletin, November 5th,1881.

(2) Information given to the writer personally by the Honourable Frank Oliver,August,1931.

Cabin passengers were entitled to a berth in the cabin but had to pay 50¢ for each meal. Deck passengers had to provide their own bedding and pay 50¢ a meal. Each passenger was allowed one hundred pounds of baggage free. Should the steamer be arrested en route through accident or other causes ,passengers were expected to accomplish the remainder of the journey at their own expense and in the best way they could. The freight rates by steamer from Lower Fort Garry to Edmonton were quoted as $6\frac{1}{4}$¢ per pound for the up journey and at 5¢ per pound for the down.(1)By the fall of 1881 the Hudson's Bay Company had given up running steamers on the Saskatchewan and the Winnipeg and Western Transportation Company had assumed control of the line.(2)

The editor of the Bulletin,Mr. Frank Oliver (who afterwards became Minister of the Interior in the Federal Government) came out strongly in support of the opening up to a greater extent of river navigation in an editorial in an issue of his paper-

"A good line of boats on the Saskatchewan would do nearly as much to open up the country as the railroad itself and would for all time to come offer strong competition to the railroad especially on eastern bound freight. An advantage that a

(1) Begg,Alexander, History of the North-West Toronto, 1894, v II, p 388ff.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, November 5th,1881.

line of boats would have on the Saskatchewan is that full loads of coal and lumber could be had for every return trip; in fact that is what is principally needed for the development of these two industries.

"When the Lake Winnipeg and Hudson's Bay railway is completed,as it will be ultimately, it in connection with the navigation of the Saskatchewan will form the shortest and most natural outlet for the surplus produce of this country on the way to the English market (1) putting Edmonton on nearly as good a footing for the shipping of grain as St. Paul is now ..... The Saskatchewan is considered by some not to be fit for navigation but it must be very bad indeed if it is not better than slow-going oxen on a muddy road one thousand miles long." (2)

A description of a trip of the steamer Northwest, which plied on the Saskatchewan between Winnipeg and Edmonton inthe year 1882 will give some idea of river navigation and its attendant difficulties.

"The Northwest arrived at Edmonton on Thursday eve, July 27th, at 6.30 o'clock,fifteen days and a half from Grand Rapids

(1) A scheme which has just recently come true in the establishing of the port at Churchill.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, November 5th,1881.

with the following passengers: Mrs. Magnus Anderson and family from Scotland for Peace River, John A.B. Milton from England for Peace River, on a pleasure trip: James Davis,Toronto, Capt. John Smith,wife and child of Prince Albert for Fort Chipewyan, Mrs. Traill and children from Carleton to Slave Lake, W. McKay and wife of Fort Pitt and a man from Fort Carleton to Fort Chipewyan.

"She was towed to the foot of Grand Rapids without accident by the Princess arriving there on the 4th of July. Her hold had been filled with empty coal oil barrels to keep her from sinking in case of accident but she had not been strengthened in any way. The same day, J. Favel,pilot, took charge of her and laid out a line twenty-eight hundred feet long. On Wednesday, they warped up the length of two lines. On Thursday,the same but the capstan broke when nearly at the end of the second line. On Friday, they got up one line when the wheel broke: on Saturday, they laid the line out and started when the capstan gave way again. On Sunday, they laid the line out and as the Northcote had just arrived she gave them a pull and succeeded in bringing the Northwest half-way over the brink when the capstan gave out and the Northwest was left balanced on the edge of the rapids. The strain was so great that the hog chains broke

and there was great danger of her breaking in two but the main chains held and she managed to pull herself into safety. She used her wheel as well as the line all the time. They began loading at once and left the rapids with one hundred and eighty-two tons of freight,"(1) The feelings of the passengers while this performance was going on are not recorded; probably they remained in blissful ignorance of any danger.

By the year 1883, the steamers operating on the Saskatchewan River from Grand Rapids numbered six. They were:- the Northcote, the Northwest, the Marquis, the Manitoba, the Lily and the Princess. The Edmonton merchants began to advertise their good as coming by steamer where formerly it was by cart.

However, navigation on the river was not confined to a few steamers. The files of the Bulletin in the early '80's show with what nonchalance travellers embarked in small boats to make extensive trips on it. One reads- "A.Macdonald of A. Macdonald and Company and Alex Dunlop of the Bulletin pulled out for Battleford and Winnipeg on Tuesday last (May 2nd) in a small boat"(2), and again "Messrs. H. Bleeker and A. R.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, July 29th, 1882.

(2) Ibid., May 6th, 1882.

Chisholm of Edmonton and W. J. Scott of Battleford started down the river on Tuesday morning last in a small boat. The two Edmonton men are bound for Winnipeg."(1) Other issues of that period record that "Mr. D.Ross successfully launched a flat boat and started for Battleford with fifty tons of coal and seven thousand feet of lumber," and that "Chief Factor McDougall and wife of Peace River left for the east per skiff."(2) The building of skiffs began to be quite a trade in Edmonton about this period and business in the spring of 1882 was quite brisk. The skiffs were sold from $15 to $20 a piece.

The advent of the railroad was the deathblow to river navigation. Branch lines were constructed to Prince Albert and Edmonton. There was steamboat traffic still on the Saskatchewan in 1886 competing with the railroad so far as freight rates were concerned. The Calgary and Edmonton railroad reached the village of Strathcona in July 1891 and its coming foreshadowed the end of river transport.

As was the case generally along the Saskatchewan River in the early days,there was for many years no means of crossing the river from bank to bank at Fort Edmonton other than by fording the stream or else by means of a boat,improvised or

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, May 20th,1882.

(2) Ibid., July 15th,1882 and September 30th,1882.

otherwise, or on a raft. When the Mounted Police came in 1874 they established and maintained for their own use a ferry at their post at Fort Saskatchewan but the Edmonton settlement was dependent on crossing in this more or less haphazard manner until shortly after 1876 when the pioneer settler, Mr. John Walters, established a ferry which plied across the river close to the Fort. It was a scow rigged with oars and when the river was high and swift the crossing was difficult.(1) This was the method used until the beginning of the '80's. In the spring of 1882, the ferry facilities were improved by the stretching of a wire cable across the river and the ferry was propelled over by this means: the scow was also lengthened to accommodate six loaded carts with animals all at once. This new wire rope ferry started on her trial trip in April, 1882. "The launching was witnessed by a vast concourse of Edmontonians. The trip was fairly successful. The boat has been christened 'The Belle of Edmonton'." (2) Later, there was a second ferry established where the Low Level bridge now is. While waiting for the ice to go out,

(1) Information given to the writer personally by the Hon. Frank Oliver, August, 1931.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, April 29th, 1882.

the method of conveying passengers across the river was to have a boat at each side which brought the passengers to the strip of ice in the middle: this they walked across and embarked at the far edge in a boat which took them to shore.(1)

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The Canadian Pacific Railroad reached Calgary in September,1883. Two stage lines were started between Calgary and Edmonton in the summer of that year and were in operation when the end of steel reached the former place. The Royal Mail passenger express and fast freight line, under the proprietorship of McPherson and Coleman,offered a fortnightly service between the two settlements and made its first trip from Edmonton on July 24th,1883. (2) A weekly stage, known as the Calgary and Edmonton line,owned and operated by Mr. D. McLeod,who was also proprietor of Jasper House hotel, long the only brick building in Edmonton, made its initial trip from Edmonton on Monday,August 6th,1883. This stage service advertised its schedule as leaving Edmonton on Monday and arriving in Calgary on Friday and on the return trip leaving the southern settlement

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 15th,1882.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, July 21st,1883.

on the following Monday and reaching Edmonton on the fifth day. the rates each way were $25 with an allowance of one hundred pounds of baggage. (1) There were a number of stopping places en route where travellers got a night's lodgings and meals. These were known as Chamberlain's, Scarlett's, The Lone Pine, Miller's, which was ten miles south of Red Deer River, Blindman,Bear's Hill and Boggy Plain. The stage route was maintained until the Calgary and Edmonton railway reached Strathcona, July 27th, 1891.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, August 4th,1883.

CHAPTER VIII

The Pioneer Days of the Church

With respect to the part that the Roman Catholic church played in the early history of Edmonton a great deal has already been said in the foregoing pages. The Roman Catholic priests were among the earliest missionaries to the Saskatchewan country. It was the Oblate Order which did the pioneer work in the district centring around Edmonton. In 1842, Father Thibault established a mission for the Cree Indians at Lac Ste Anne which was the headquarters of their work for a number of years. Ill health having forced Father Thibault to relinquish his labours,Father Lacombe arrived in the country to take over the work in 1852. He spent his first year at Fort Edmonton, where a log house, assigned to him by Factor Rowand, served as chapel and residence. After assuming charge of the Lac Ste. Anne mission, fifty miles distant, the missionary made frequent visits to the post to minister to the spiritual needs of those of the faith resident there. Later, when the mission

of St. Albert was established in 1861, the services at the Fort were under his care and the Hudson's Bay Company's journals of this period record the visits of Fathers Lacombe, Remas and Bourassa. In 1863, Chief Factor Christie sanctioned the erection of a chapel within the walls of the fort and also of a house for the priest. Father Lacombe, on his return from a visit to Bishop Taché in 1863, brought back a young priest, Father Scollen, who established a school in the Fort for the children of the Hudson's Bay Company's employees and also assumed charge of the mission chapel. In 1876, when Edmonton took on the semblance of a settlement, the chapel was moved outside of the Fort. Mr. Malcolm Groat, an ex-employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, who staked the first claim west of the reserve, when the land was open for settlement, gave nine acres to the Roman Catholics for a church. Here, a chapel was built with Reverend Father Blanchet in charge, although he continued to reside at the St. Albert mission and went back and forth. In 1882, a new church was undertaken on the Hudson's Bay reserve, which at that date had been subdivided into a town plot and the lots sold to incoming settlers. The Company had adopted the policy of donating free sites for schools and churches. The new chapel was on the location of the present St. Joachim's church. The initial service was held there on Sunday, October 14th, 1882. Reverend Father Grandin, a nephew

of Bishop Grandin of St. Albert, became the parish priest. His pastorate lasted until 1890, when he was succeeded by Father Fauquet and in turn by Father Lacombe.

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Missions under the auspices of the Wesleyan or Methodist Church were first established in Western Canada in 1840 by the Reverend James Evans of Montreal under the direction of the Wesleyan Missionary Society of England. He, in company with three young men sent from England to assist him, came out to the West to start four Indian missions at various points under the protection of and supported largely by the Hudson's Bay Company. The Reverend Robert Rundle was assigned to Edmonton and Rocky Mountain House and was the first Methodist missionary to reach Alberta. On his arrival at Fort Edmonton,September 1st, 1840, he was hospitably received by the Factor, given comfortable quarters and a place at the officers' mess. As his ministrations were primarily intended to be among the Indians, he covered a considerable area, visiting Beaver Lake, Rocky Mountain House, and Blackfoot tribes on the Bow River and the Stonies around Banff, and therefore his residence at the Fort was not continuous. Later, Mr. Rundle established a mission at Pigeon Lake and spent practically all his time there, until he left the country in 1848.

In 1854, the Society in England transferred the Indian missions in Western Canada to the jurisdiction of the Methodist Church of Canada, and six years later the Methodist Conference of Upper Canada assigned the superintendency of the Methodist missions in the West to the Reverend George McDougall, who is known as the father of Methodism in Alberta. The missionary work in Alberta from the years 1854 to 1862 was carried on by the Reverend Thomas Woolsey and the Reverend Henry B. Steinhauer assisted by Reverend Benjamin Sinclair and Peter Erasmus. Of this group, Reverend Mr. Woolsey made Edmonton his headquarters and, on his arrival in September 1855, received the same hospitality at the Fort that had been accorded his predecessor, Mr. Rundle. Two years later, he transferred his headquarters to the Pigeon Lake mission where he remained until he returned to England in 1864. In 1862, the Western Superintendent, Reverend George McDougall, journeyed from Winnipeg to look over the missions of the Saskatchewan district. After visiting the missions of Whitefish Lake and Smoky Lake in charge of the Reverends Steinhauer and Woolsey respectively, he decided to remove the latter station to Victoria (now Pakan),which place he made his own headquarters until 1871. For a number of years then prior to 1871, Edmonton had been carried on the list of stations in the missionary rooms of the Wesleyan church but no church had been established here

or regular church services held. The ministrations for short periods of the Reverend Robert Rundle, the Reverend Thomas Woolsey and occasional visits from the Reverend George McDougall, after he had made Victoria his headquarters in 1862, were all the post received under Wesleyan auspices.

After the transference of Rupert's Land to Canada, the chairman, Reverend George McDougall, was convinced that Edmonton occupied a more strategic position with respect to the future development of the country and that Methodism would have a wider scope here than at Victoria. He, therefore, moved up from Victoria in 1871 and founded the first Wesleyan as well as the first Protestant church to be built in Edmonton. To him is also given the credit of being the moving spirit in starting the settlement which grew into the village of Edmonton, as others following his example promptly took up claims and built homes for themselves. Arriving here in May 1871, Mr. McDougall took up his quarters temporarily in the Hudson's Bay Fort. He then chose as a site for the mission a piece of land immediately adjoining the Hudson's Bay reserve on the east: it was the first claim staked in the settlement and had a frontage of two hundred yards. A similar amount was accorded to the parsonage which was the next claim. The building of the mission house or parsonage was at once undertaken. "It was a nice, well-built building of spruce logs

all sawn by hand, with a shingle roof and the nails used were made by the blacksmith of the Hudson's Bay fort."(1) It was finished on November 16th,1871, and the McDougalls moved in immediately. The Methodist mission house stood on the site now occupied by the Memorial Hall and the balm of Gilead trees still standing near the street were planted by Reverend George McDougall in front of his house,in 1872.

In June 1872, the church was commenced,and completed in 1873. It was a frame building well finished inside and out. It stood where the small dwelling house in the rear of the present church now stands.(2) (3) "The wherewithal for the building of the church and parsonage was furnished partly by the Methodist Missionary Society, partly by the people in the neighborhood and partly in labour by Mr. McDougall and his family." (4) In this connection, "The people resident about Edmonton, when the Mission was started, contributed generously for poor men in addition to

(1) Information given to the writer personally by the Honourable Frank Oliver.

(2) Letter from William Leslie Woods of the Hudson's Bay Company to the Edmonton Bulletin,June 24th,1882.

(3) This small dwelling house was in reality the original log church covered with lumber and dormer windows added. The first theological classes of Alberta College were held there. It was then used for a students' residence for many years and is now in use as a storehouse and janitor's quarters.--Rev. F.S.McCall, Alberta College, Edmonton.

(4) Edmonton Bulletin,March 4th,1882.

labour towards building up the parsonage and church and fencing the graveyard. The amount collected fell somewhat short of paying all expenses connected with the mission property and the Mission Society paid up the balance."(1) The front part of both claims was fenced in, that of the church for use as a grave-yard and that of the parsonage as a garden.

The next ten chains, the third claim to the east of the Hudson's Bay line, became the property of Mr. David McDougall, son of the Reverend George McDougall. The Edmonton Club and the Macdonald Hotel are on this property, which extended to the vicinity of the Bulletin office.

The first congregational meeting of which there is any record was held in the church on January 12th,1874, and the Ladies' Aid of the church was organised in 1876. Even before the parsonage and church were got under way a Sunday School was started in the Fort with an enrolment of twenty scholars.

The Reverend George McDougall was also instrumental in looking after the educational needs of the settlement. "At the request of some of the people Mr. McDougall got a school master and let him have the use of his house.....the sum of $30 was collected towards the school-master's salary: this was paid by two parties and the Wesleyan Methodist Church Society paid the balance."(2)

(1) Letter from William Leslie Woods of the Hudson's Bay Company to the Edmonton Bulletin,June 24th,1882.

(2) Ibid.

The founder of the Methodist church in Edmonton laboured with indefatigable zeal in the interests of the church, which, during his residence here, had a large attendance, but he did not remain long enough in the settlement to see his work progress very far. In 1875, Mr. McDougall moved to Morley, west of Calgary, and started a mission there. While on a hunting expedition early in 1876, he became lost and was frozen to death on the prairies.

For some years after Reverend George McDougall's departure, the records of the mission are very imperfect. From the date of his leaving in 1875 up to the summer of 1880 a resident missionary was kept in Edmonton by the Society. He occupied the house, cultivated the garden and held services in the church. "In the summer of '80 the resident missionary left and a mission school teacher occupied the premises doing the double duty of minister and teacher up to the spring of '81 when he was removed to make room for a resident minister." (1) The minister, however, did not put in an appearance and the church was closed. It was not in use when the first Presbyterian minister came and was loaned to the Presbyterians for a time to hold their first services. The mission property was left

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, March 4th, 1882

in charge of Mr. R. Hardisty, who was one of the trustees and he rented the mission house or parsonage to Mr. M. McCauley,who took the responsibility of repairing the fences and caring for the property until a missionary should be appointed. Religious services were held from time to time as occasion offered and the Sabbath School was regularly kept up. The Edmonton Bulletin of December 3rd,1881, announced that Reverend John McDougall would preach in Cree in the Methodist church at 10.30 in the morning and in English at 7.00 o'clock in the evening on Sunday. Again in the issue of March 4th,1881, it was recorded that "the Reverend J. A. McLachlan of Victoria arrived here on Saturday afternoon last and held morning and evening services in the Methodist church on Sunday, April 28th,1881. He left again on Monday." By September of that year there was a regular resident pastor as evidenced by a church announcement-"A meeting of the congregation of the Methodist church was held in the church Wednesday evening- Reverend D. C. Sanderson,pastor, presiding. The following committee were appointed as a general church committee: Richard Hardisty, Dr. C. H. Wilson, J. F. Williams, William Leslie Wood, John Hambly,James Gullion,and Frank Oliver.(1)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, September 30th,1882.

Apparently, the Methodist church activities were in a flourishing condition and the number of adherents had increased so that the church building was unable to accommodate them. How best to meet the need was evidently a matter for discussion and certain alterations were agreed on. "The Methodist church have decided to increase the seating capacity of the church by erecting a gallery. Seats sufficient for the choir will be put in at first and these will be added to as occasion requires. James McDonald has the contract for putting in the gallery and also of erecting an inside porch for $200, he finding all the lumber."(1)

In 1883, the Methodist congregation decided to establish some fitting memorial to the work of the founder of Methodism in Alberta and first pastor of the church. Collections at various Sabbath services were set apart for this purpose. Towards the end of June, 1883, a memorial tablet commemorating the work of the Reverend George McDougall on behalf of the Methodist church was placed in the building. It is thus described: "It is plain, of white marble, set on black slate; the inscription is in English and Cree--'Let not your hearts be troubled'. In memory of the Reverend George McDougall. 'I am the resurrection and the life'."(2) (3)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, October 28th, 1882.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, June 30th, 1883.

(3) This tablet is in the lobby of the present church.

As has been said, for a number of years after the Reverend George McDougall had given up the charge of the Edmonton mission, the church records are very fragmentary but from 1884 onwards, when Reverend John E. Howard came as pastor, they are fairly complete. They tell a story of struggle under pioneer conditions. Following Mr. Howard in the pastorate came Reverend G. H. Long and he in turn was succeeded by Reverend C. A. Procunier in 1890.

In the year 1892, the first church building was moved across 101st street to the land which is now the site of the Journal building and a newer and larger frame church was built. With the coming of the Reverend George Hanna in 1893 a new parsonage was necessary and part of the building which is still the parsonage was constructed.

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The first Church of England clergyman in Edmonton was the Reverend William Newton, Honorary Canon of Saskatchewan, who has left an account of his work as a missionary in the North-West in his book, "Twenty Years on the Saskatchewan".

Of his setting forth on his journey he writes, "In the spring of 1875, I left my parish in the Toronto diocese to become a missionary in the North-West, sent thither by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel .. .. It looked a very serious business to get to Edmonton and the mountain district around it without any well-defined means of transit. I should have to journey through a region where there were no public boats,no bridges crossing the rivers, no guides whom I could hire and no means of protection from rude white men or from savage Indians. So matters seemed to a simple clergyman who had undertaken the work of the church in obedience to the call of Divine Providence."(1)

Canon Newton set out up the Great Lakes to Prince Arthur's Landing and then over what was known as the Dawson route to Winnipeg. Here he made further inquiries as to his journey and equipment. "On leaving Winnipeg for Edmonton , he says, "It was thought necessary for me to have in addition to a buckboard, a Red River cart and abundance of provisions for I was told I might not be able to procure

(1) Newton, Reverend William, Twenty Years on the Saskatchewan, London, 1897, page 1 and 2.

any when I arrived in Edmonton and the winter would be at hand ..... On the journey I found the trails as best I could,meeting with all sorts of mishaps from day to day. Sometimes the horses strayed or the Red River cart which was built all of wood would break down or from careless driving or restive horses would be upset. Now and then hills were too steep for our horses to draw up the loads and we had to wait for assistance from some chance passers-by."(1)

Up to the time he reached Fort Carleton,Canon Newton had come upon few Indians. En route he had met and joined a trader and also two Chipewyan Indians. "Now and then a brave had ridden up to us with his gun cocked half begging,half demanding tobacco but that was all the annoyance we suffered."(2) Farther along the journey the Indians were found to be discontented, restless, and disinclined to permit white men through their territories, one reason being the scarcity of game which they did not want to share with anyone as their families were frequently in want. He tells of being stopped by scouts from a party of Crees "who had been sent by their band to learn who we were

(1) Newton,Reverend William, Twenty Years on the Saskatchewan, London, 1897, p 7.

(2) Ibid. p 11.

and order us to return eastward for they were determined not to allow us to proceed through their country."(1) Canon Newton met the band and presented his case. "I told the chief very respectfully who we were, that the great chiefs of the English Church had sent me to teach the people around Edmonton the way of the true Christian religion and that of course I must go on my journey and do the work I had been sent to do."(2) With this explanation and the distribution of plugs of tobacco, they agreed to be friends and brothers and to assist him on his journey. For the next two hundred miles the Indians were friendly everywhere.

After a journey of five months from Ontario, Fort Edmonton was sighted on September 28th,1875. At that date, the population of Edmonton district was small, consisting of Hudson's Bay employees, a few mounted police, roaming miners, transient surveyors and a number of half-breeds and white men most of whom did freighting back and forth across the plains and were absent from the

(1) Newton,Reverend William, Twenty Years on the Saskatchewan, London, 1897, p 12.

(2) Ibid. p 12ff.

settlement for long stretches of time. Canon Newton gives his first impressions of the place . "Edmonton was simply a fort where hunters brought their furs and received goods in exchange. On my arrival I found very few residents and these were nearly all servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. Nine miles from the Fort were the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church and the Catholics had at that time a church within the Fort itself. Within sight of the Fort were also a Methodist chapel and parsonage. The leading people at the Fort were Methodists and very zealous Methodists too. They did not attend our services nor did they encourage their servants to attend.....As for me there was no parsonage, no church nor any means for building. I had been sent as a missionary to settlers, but where were they ? I could not find such persons as we usually designate settlers. Beyond the mission stations even a potato patch was seldom to be seen and a farm never." (1)

Canon Newton was kindly received at the Fort and offered hospitality for a few days. Then,by mere chance, he was able to rent a partly finished log building which was to be his residence and church. It had first to be repaired as winter was at hand. Lumber and a carpenter were secured after considerable difficulty and at a high price.

(1) Newton. Rev. William, Twenty Years on the Saskatchewan, London, 1897, pages 16 and 17.

"The first winter I spent in Edmonton, wrote Canon Newton, "was a very cold one, the frost often registering forty or fifty degrees below zero. I was fortunate to obtain a small cook-stove at the Fort which with the pipes cost one hundred dollars. The stove was not sufficient to warm the room and it needed perpetual attention night and day with the slight wood of the country to keep us from freezing in our badly built house. Often I tried to write and placed the ink in front of the stove in order that it might thaw out but before the pen could touch the paper and write a word the ink in the pen would be frozen and writing exceedingly difficult..... Besides the cold we had no light nor could procure any. Neither coal nor oil could be bought and tallow for making candles cost fifty cents a pound and only about two pounds could be purchased during the winter at that price. " (1)

The Anglican clergyman evidently encountered many difficulties in pursuance of his parochial duties and endured many discomforts in getting established. He says further, "I had gone into a partly furnished log house which I obtained by mere accident: two hundred dollars of my own money had been spent in making it at all habitable. We used the whole

(1) Newton, Rev. William, Twenty Years on the Saskatchewan, London, 1897, page 19 and 20.

of the upper part for a chapel and in fine weather it was very suitable and looked very well but in snowy weather the storms gave us great trouble . Often,on Sunday mornings we had to use shovels to throw the snow out of the windows, then when the fire had melted the snow on the open rafters the wet came down on our heads and caused discomfort at the services. I could find no accommodation in the small log cottages close by. These generally consisted of two rooms and were occupied by large families. In these there was little method of housekeeping and no privacy. " (1)

As the tenancy of his house was rather uncertain Canon Newton was in a dilemma what to do. A neighbor offered his house and land for sale for a thousand dollars. Canon Newton at once wrote to the church authorities but received the reply that no funds were available. He also found the cost of living very high and with difficulty eked out an existence. His means of subsistence, he said, were £200 a year which with Edmonton prices was about equal to £50 in Ontario or England.

A little later ,the owner of the house, which was the temporary church and parsonage combined, wished to have immediate

(1) Newton,Rev. William, Twenty Years on the Saskatchewan, London, 1897, p 33

possession of it and Canon Newton was forced to look about for another location. He chose a site about seven miles from Edmonton on the Saskatchewan river towards Fort Saskatchewan. The spot was cleared and a small log house erected during the summer of 1876. "It was with the greatest difficulty that I obtained lumber and shingles at heavy expense and then had to fetch them almost entirely by myself and from a great distance," (1) wrote the Anglican clergyman. When the "Hermitage", as the place was named, was finished, the Canon took up his permanent residence there in December, 1876. This solved the problem of living quarters: it was then necessary to find a place for the church services. These were held in whatever house was available but this arrangement was far from satisfactory for "sometimes the people would be away on the plains freighting or there would be sickness in the family and the rooms could not be used for Sunday gatherings." (2)

Of his congregation and parochial duties Canon Newton had this to say: "From the first a few persons attended the service. Officials in the Hudson's Bay Company were glad

(1) Newton, Rev. William, Twenty Years on the Saskatchewan, London, 1897 , p 35

(2) Ibid. p 62

to renew old church associations as they passed to other posts, camps of surveyors sought a little Sunday rest and change from the monotony of their lives on the prairies after the manner of their father's. Mounted police,who had just come into the country and were located some eighteen or twenty miles away, were offered frequent services,children were collected for instruction and Indian tents were visited. " (1) The camps of the surveyors referred to were those engaged in surveying for the proposed Canadian Pacific Railway line through the passes of the Rocky Mountains. They made Edmonton their headquarters during the winter of 1875. Occasionally, when engaged out on the survey line a considerable distance they would come to the Fort to do business,covering the distance with their dog trains. Canon Newton told of having his first experience of travelling by a dog-train while being taken out by some of these surveyors, visiting the Fort, to their camp. "They would take me back with them, twenty, thirty, forty and sometimes fifty miles out on the survey line. I was glad to hold services with the men or on a week night ,after they had returned from their work,to give them a lecture on some subject in which they were likely to be interested. " (2)

(1) Newton,Rev. William,Twenty Years on the Saskatchewan, London, 1897, p 21

(2) Ibid. p 24

The Anglican clergyman during his first winter paid a visit to the Roman Catholic Mission at St. Albert, the occasion being the receiving of the Bishop's nephew into the priesthood. He gave the following description of the ceremony: " I found a convenient church for such a far-off mission and the service was rendered as in the front parts of Canada. There were perhaps twenty priests present as well as many lay brothers and Gray nuns, who were all actively employed in their several locations. On that and on every occasion when I met the Roman Catholic Bishop (Grandin) and his people I am bound to say I have received most graceful and kindly attentions. " (1)

By the summer of 1876, Canon Newton found that, on account of the sparse population of Edmonton many of whom had a religious faith of other denominations, his time could not be fully occupied by his church duties: he, therefore, paid visits to neighboring Indian bands out on the prairies and also frequent visits to Victoria, about eighty miles away, being invited to minister to a group of settlers who had come in from the Red River settlement in Manitoba and who still maintained a loyalty to the Church of England. The foundations of the Anglican churches at Fort Saskatchewan and Belmont were also

(1) Newton, Rev. William, Twenty Years on the Saskatchewan, London, 1897, p 25 ff

laid and an occasional journey as far south as Red Deer was made by the missionary.

The Venerable Archdeacon Tims in writing a historical survey of the diocese of Calgary has given a word picture of this pioneer Anglican clergyman. "He was a very short man,not more than five feet in height, always wore the cassock and was quite an 'advanced' churchman in those days. He was keen on the establishment of a sisterhood but Bishop McLean would not sanction it. Canon Newton was so short that when seated in a buckboard or sleigh his head could not be seen over the back. On one occasion,as he drove through Edmonton,some one noticed the team after it had passed them and,thinking that the horses had broken loose and were trotting off without the owner, started in pursuit until he found Canon Newton sitting snugly in the vehicle and holding the reins. " (1)

The church situation had still to be solved. A small church near the Fort was absolutely necessary but the lack of funds rendered the problem difficult of settlement. "For," said Canon Newton, "our people were poor and there was absolutely no money in the country. Everything was done by barter or in trade as it was called and it became a problem how to manage the finances

(1) Tims,Venerable Archdeacon,Calgary Diocesan Gazette, Easter 1928.

of a church when there were no finances and no skins to barter for labour or means of labour. How even was the ground to be secured for a building ?" (1)

It was just a few years before that the Hudson's Bay Company had transferred their rights to Prince Rupert's Land and apart from their reserve there had been no survey of the land. The legality of private ownership was still a question to be decided. The settler who had taken up and improved his homestead was in a state of uncertainty as to whether he would have to relinquish his claim or whether in the case of a survey its boundaries would be changed. "However, a settler a mile from Fort Edmonton allowed the Church of England from his claim five acres for which," wrote Canon Newton, "I gave him $5.00 as the only way of defining the bargain and securing the rights of both parties. The five acres became nine when the surveys were made." (2) This settler was Malcolm Groat, who had located a place adjacent to the Hudson's Bay property on the west. (3)

In 1876, the bishop of the diocese, Reverend George McLean, paid his first visit to the Edmonton district and established

(1) Newton, Rev. William, Twenty Years on the Saskatchewan, London, 1897, p 62 ff.

(2) Ibid. p 63.

(3) Information given personally to the writer by the Hon. Frank Oliver, August, 1931.

the first parish of the Anglican church to be known as All Saints' parish. He encouraged the idea of church building and a committee of local men was formed, who decided on the size, type and cost of the building. The next year, 1877, the church project was got under way. A subscription list was opened to raise $2,000, the amount estimated for the structure. Canon Newton gave as a personal subscription $240 as he said to stir up public generosity. The church authorities also sent $500 towards the fund. The Chief Trader of the Hudson's Bay Company was very active on the committee and under his direction men were supplied with provisions and sent into the woods to cut lumber. But the cost of provisions for the men and the materials for the church made such great inroads on the sum collected that by the time the shell of the church was nearly completed the money was all gone. The church had no chancel and the inner roof was bare. "Just then," wrote the Canon, " a government saw-mill was being closed sixty miles above the Fort. I bought enough lumber to complete the building and again this was my own personal subscription." (1) The Bishop of Saskatchewan made an eloquent appeal to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge which donated a further sum of $500 to the cause. The Bishop then appointed the Hudson's Bay Chief Trader as the trustee

(1) Newton, Rev. William, Twenty Years on the Sasktchewan, London, 1897, p 65.

of the diocese and all further business in connection with the erection of the church was handed over to him by Canon Newton.

By 1881, the settlement had gained considerably in population and the Anglican congregation had increased. In September 1883, the Bishop again visited the Edmonton diocese and went thoroughly into the affairs of the Anglican mission to see what could be done to stimulate the work of the church. "The town of Edmonton", he told the adherents, "must ultimately become the capital of a great province and become a great city and he wanted to see the church prosper here." (1) The question of the advisability of moving All Saints church from its position in the western end of the settlement (2) to the centre in order to be more accessible to the residents (3) was thoroughly discussed at a meeting called by the Bishop. The general feeling, however, was against the move. Arrangements were then made to hold the Sabbath School and the evening service in the centre of the town, the Masonic Hall being secured for that purpose. The Bishop also arranged

(1) Edmonton Bulletin,September 15th,1883.

(2) It was then situated on what is now 114th St.

(3) What houses there were in the settlement were east of 101st street.

to have church matters put upon the customary basis in an Anglican parish that is the appointment of clergymen's and people's wardens and a number of vestrymen .

This first church was years afterwards sold by auction for $50 and used as a stable.(1) In 1890, another building elsewhere in the parish began to be used as a church and in 1895,with the coming of the former Bishop H. A. Gray, the site now occupied by All-Saints Pro-Cathedral was chosen and built upon.

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In the year 1881, the Superintendent of Missions of the Presbyterian church, in response to oft repeated requests from a little band of settlers of the Presbyterian faith who were settled in and about Edmonton, saw fit to send a representative of that church,in the person of the Reverend Andrew Browning Baird, to found a church . The announcement was made to the settlement in a letter from the Reverend James Robertson, the Superintendent of Presbyterian Missions in the North-West, who spoke in most complimentary terms of the new appointee. He wrote, "The minister was long in reaching you owing to circumstances over which we

(1) Newton, Reverend William,Twenty Years on the Saskatchewan, London, 1897, p 67.

had no control but many envy you the one you are getting."(1)

The Reverend Andrew Browning Baird, M.A.,B.D., who had just been ordained in Ontario, set out alone from Winnipeg, to which point he had come by rail, driving his buckboard containing his tent and provisions for camping and covered the distance in thirty-one days. Of this experience, Dr. Baird afterwards said, "I was for four days without seeing a mortal, putting up my tent each evening, tethering my horse, cooking my supper and sleeping with the howling of the wolves providing a lullaby."(2) En route he encountered the usual difficulties met with by travellers in those early days which included crossing the high waters of the Vermilion River on a raft. He reached his destination via Fort Saskatchewan on Saturday, October 29th,1881.

The expectant parishioners extended a warm welcome to Dr. Baird and a few days after his arrival, on the evening of November 3rd, a meeting was held in the carpenter shop of Oliver and McDonald (3) for the purpose of organizing a Presbyterian congregation in Edmonton. After the invocation by the Reverend

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, November 5th,1881.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, November 15th,1881.

(3) Mr. James McDonald had been the person through whom the correspondence with the church authorities in Toronto with reference to securing a minister had been carried on.

Mr. Baird, a chairman and secretary in the persons of Mr. D.S. McKay and Mr. John Cameron respectively were elected. The motion being put and passed, "that we do now organize a Presbyterian church in Edmonton," twenty-one persons gave in their names as members or adherents.(1) After a careful reading of the constitution of Knox Church, Winnipeg, it was adopted with a few minor changes. The meeting then proceeded to ballot for the choosing of a management committee, which resulted in the election of the following: Messrs. D. S. McKay, John Cameron, D. S. Fraser, James McDonald, Murdoch McLeod and George Gullion. Mr. John Cameron was then chosen clerk, Mr. James McDonald,treasurer, and Messrs. J. A. McDougall and W. Leslie as auditors.(2)

There was of course no church building and temporary provision had to be made to hold church services. The committee of management were instructed to proceed with arrangements for securing a place of worship for the time being. On the morning of Sunday,November 6th,1881, at eleven o'clock, the Reverend Andrew Baird conducted the first service of the first Presbyterian church in Edmonton. It was held in the Methodist church building which was at that time vacant and which had been offered by the Methodists. Excerpts from the early meetings of the Presbyterian congregation and of its management committee will show how the church got under way.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, November 5th,1881.

(2) Ibid.

The newly instituted committee of management met on Saturday, November 26th, 1881, when the small sub-committee appointed to see about securing a place of worship brought in its findings: "That they had interviewed Reverend John McDougall in regard to securing the Methodist church (which was not then in use) and had received an offer of the church gratuitously but it would not be rented on any condition. Mr. John A. McDougall has also been interviewed with regard to the use of his hall above his granary and had offered to heat and light the hall for $10 monthly, with a subscription of $25 towards furnishing."(1) As it was felt the privilege of using the Methodist church would be only temporary and the building might be needed by that group at any time, it was decided to decline this offer and secure Mr. McDougall's hall under the terms offered. The initial services of the Presbyterian church were therefore held in the upstairs hall over Mr. J. A. McDougall's granary every Sunday at eleven a.m. and six-thirty p.m. This building is still standing on the south side of Jasper Avenue just opposite the end of Fraser Avenue. The procuring of church furnishings was the next matter of immediate concern. An offer to donate the material for fifty chairs each was forthcoming from Messrs. C. Stewart and D. McLeod. This offer was gratefully accepted and steps were taken to have the chairs made. The finances of the church were

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, December 3rd,1881.

dealt with at a meeting held on December 3rd, 1881, and a committee consisting of Messrs. Fraser and McKay was appointed to raise subscriptions to defray the church's expenses for the year.(1)

The McDougall hall was of course but a temporary shelter and the management committee turned their attention towards the securing of permanent quarters. The Hudson's Bay Company had made a standing offer of free sites on their property for church purposes. Lots were also offered to the committee by A. Macdonald and Company. At a meeting of the Presbyterian congregation held on February 16th, 1882, the recommendation of the management committee was approved, viz. to accept the offer of the Hudson's Bay Company of a gift of lots 83 and 84 for the manse and lots 85 and 86 for the church, all in range 2; to proceed at once with the erection of the church building, and to circulate a subscription list to raise the necessary funds. It was felt that a building should be erected to provide for a seating capacity of two hundred. A collection committee was then appointed consisting of Messrs. Cameron,Fraser,Stewart,Ross, Wilson and McKay.(2)

No doubt the modest building undertaken by the Presbyterians of Edmonton gave as much joy and satisfaction to the adherents of that faith as though the building had been a magnificent edifice of brick or stone. The management committee reported to the

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, December 3rd,1881.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, February 18th,1882.

annual meeting of the Presbyterian congregation held March 29th,1882, "That they had resolved on the erection of a frame building 50 by 80 feet with four Gothic windows on each side and a porch in front. Outside the walls were to be of dressed lumber ,tongued and grooved, inside they were to be battened and plastered."(1) It was also announced at this meeting,although the canvass had not yet been completed, subscriptions had been obtained to the amount of $1,078, besides several promises for indefinite amounts.

In May 1882, the contract for the church building was awarded to Mr. J. R. Burton, the price being $650, all material furnished; the plastering and inside work to be done by another contract.(2) The work progressed rapidly during the summer and on Sunday, November 5th, 1882, the anniversary of the establishment of the congregation the year before, the opening service of the new church was held. In the afternoon of the same day a Sabbath school was organized with Mr. G. Blake as superintendent.

The first marriage to take place in the new Presbyterian church was that of a Mr. and Mrs. Coutts. The ceremony was performed on the evening of the second day after the church was opened and the custom of those days to present the first couple married in a new church with a Bible was carried out.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 1st, 1882.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, May 13th,1882.

The first communion service of the newly established Presbyterian church was held in November 1881, when there were added to the roll of membership of the newly organized congregation nine charter members whose names were: Mrs. Allan Omand, Mrs. Phillip Heiminck, Messrs. George A. Blake,Hugh McKay, D.S.McKay, James A. Petrie, Mrs. Alfred Hutchings, Mrs. Thomas Henderson and Mrs. James Goodridge.(1)

The site of the new church was on what was afterwards the north-west corner of 104th street and McKay avenue (now 99th avenue), where the present manse is situated. "Our dining-room table stands today, where the pulpit of the old church stood," said Mrs. D.G.McQueen,widow of the second pastor, recalling her first view of the little church.(2)

The Reverend Mr. Baird was the only Presbyterian minister for two hundred miles in any direction. Very soon after the founding of the church in Edmonton,services were established in outlying districts such as the Sturgeon River, Belmont, Fort Saskatchewan and Clover Bar. Later on, during the years 1884,1885 and 1886, for the summer months, the assistance of theological students

(1) from an undated newspaper clipping regarding the celebration of the 40th(1927) anniversary of Dr. D. G. McQueen's arrival in Edmonton,found in Mrs. Alice McDougall Inglis's scrap-book.

(2) Information given to the writer personally by Mrs. D. G. McQueen, June,1831.

was obtained to lighten the duties of the pastor but, when these returned to college in the fall, the whole burden again fell on one man and it was no light one in those days of difficult travel.

Dr. Baird ministered to the Presbyterian church at Edmonton until 1887, when he accepted a call to a professorship in the newly formed Manitoba College, Winnipeg. The congregation, greatly perturbed, again appealed to the Reverend James Robertson, Superintendent of Western Missions. While in Toronto at that time (1887), he sought for a young undergraduate of Knox College who would be willing to come west for church work, and made the most wise selection in the person of the Reverend David George McQueen. Reverend Mr. McQueen set out for the West, was ordained at Qu'Appelle by the presbytery of Regina, within whose bounds Edmonton was situated, on the 21st of June, 1887, and reached Edmonton by stage from Calgary. The journey from Calgary then took five days and four nights. On his arrival he threw himself with characteristic vigour into the building up of the church's work and was given charge of the services at the outside points until Mr. Baird's departure for Winnipeg, in August.

The families of the congregation,when Dr. McQueen came to Edmonton in 1887, were- Bailey,Bell,Cameron,Craig,Coleman, Fraser, Ferguson,Goodridge,Hutchings,Harold,Hourston,Kinnaird, Lauder, Latimer, McDougall, McKay, McLeod,McKinley,Robertson, Ross Sutherland, Steele, Wilson,Oliver, Walker and Welbourne.

Under Dr. McQueen's ministration the little congregation grew so that the small frame church building on the corner of 104th Street and McKay Avenue would not accommodate it. The second church was erected in 1901 on the corner of Jasper Avenue and 103rd Street and was used until 1912, when the present church was built.

There was apparently not a manse at first, for Mrs. McQueen tells that the first house she lived in in Edmonton was a rented house on part of the McKay Avenue school grounds. The original first Presbyterian manse, in which the McQueen's lived for years, is two doors north of the present manse which stands at the corner of 104th Street and 99th Avenue. This was the site of the original church.(1)

(1) Information given to the writer personally by Mrs. D. G. McQueen, June, 1931.

CHAPTER IX

Beginnings of Agriculture

As a trading post for many years Fort Edmonton's chief function was the barter and collection of furs to be despatched to the headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company in London for the markets of the outside world. The supplies for the maintenance of its employees and for the trade with the Indians came once a year from London to York Factory on Hudson's Bay and from there were brought to the inland posts by the brigades returning from the outgoing shipment of furs. Buffalo meat was long the staple food for white men, Indians and half-breeds in the country and the supply was plentiful until about the year 1870. The Company's men had also a daily ration of flour, sugar, tea, candles, etc., all of which were shipped from England. With their wants thus supplied it was therefore not necessary to till the soil nor had they any inclination to do so. For many years,however, there had been a small quantity of potatoes grown on a plot near the Fort and a good deal of barley was raised to feed the pack-horses of the Company of which there was always a large number kept at the post.

The limited extent of agricultural activity around Fort Edmonton seems to have been noticed and remarked on by various people who visited the post over the course of years. Alexander Ross in noting conditions around the Fort during his stay there in 1825 tells

of the raising of grain in considerable quantity and of barley and potatoes being extensively grown.

Sir George Simpson, the "Emperor Governor" as he was known, paid one of his ceremonial visits to the Fort in 1841, and on this occasion , as on other visits, his keen eye did not fail to note conditions in general around the post,even to minute details - "On this our last afternoon,we made a tour of the farm. The pasturage was most luxuriant; and a large dairy was maintained. Among the cattle was a buffalo heifer seven years of age procured for the purpose of crossing the breed. Sheep could not be kept, for in addition to the severity of the climate the packs of dogs and wolves in the neighborhood would have destroyed them. Barley yielded generally a fair return; but wheat was almost sure to be destroyed by the early frosts. The garden produced potatoes, turnips, and a few other hardy vegetables." (1)

Paul Kane , the Canadian artist, who journeyed across Canada to the Pacific Coast for the purpose of obtaining sketches of the Indians, spent the winter of 1847-48 at Fort Edmonton on his return trip. The record of his travels mentions the agricultural activities around the Fort in the description of

(1) Simpson, Sir George, Overland Journey Round the World, London, 1847, v I, p 105.

living conditions generally at the post. Potatoes and turnips were to be had in abundance and were of excellent quality. Wheat was grown to some extent but early frosts frequently destroyed the crop. The yield ranged from twenty to twenty-five bushels per acre which seemed to be regarded as very satisfactory, though the farming methods were termed by the artist as "indifferent". A windmill had been erected which turned out very good flour. Indian corn also had been tried but with little success due mainly to the shortness of the summer. (1)

In the intervening years from the time of the visit of the artist to that of Dr. James Hector of the Palliser Expedition in 1857-58, apparently the area of land under cultivation around the post had been reduced to a considerable extent. Dr. Hector speaks of the farm as small - not more than thirty acres in size, but the only one on the Saskatchewan. He comments that the flats and hight bank adjoining the establishment, a large portion of which had hitherto been cultivated, had not been used for this purpose for some years. The windmill mentioned by Paul Kane was still in use,although the split granite boulders made rather clumsy and not overly effective millstones. With a favourable

(1) Kane,Paul, Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America from Canada to Vancouver Island and Oregon through the Hudson's Bay Territory and back again, London, 1859, p 366.

wind,however, the results of the grinding were sufficiently good to lead this visitor to conclude that, if the milling was well managed, the product in quality and quantity would be adequate for the needs of the small community ,whose demands for this commodity were filled by importation from the Red River or indeed all the way from distant England. (1)

Of the Overlanders of '62, who travelled via Edmonton, the McNaughton party stopped at the Fort for a few days, on their way to the Cariboo country, in July of that year. This group also made observations on the paucity of agricultural enterprise around the post. They expressed wonderment that the Hudson's Bay Company did not go in for the cultivation of wheat more extensively in view of the high value set upon flour in the community and particularly when the soil and climate were so favourable to this industry.(2)

The first plow was brought into the Edmonton district by Father Lacombe,when he established the Roman Catholic Mission at St. Albert in 1861. While the timber was being felled and the logs sawn for the chapel and dwelling, the missionary kept two half-breeds busy breaking the soil with the one and only plow as long as daylight lasted. He also started the women at a communal garden

(1) Palliser's Journal, p 72.

(2) McNaughton, Margaret, Overland to Cariboo, Toronto, 1896, p 57ff.

and at the same time the men were engaged in getting timber and constructing houses. In this garden quantities of vegetables were raised with great success that summer and succeeding ones and proved not only a welcome addition to their diet but eked out their food supply when other provisions ran low and buffalo were scarce. The summer of 1863 Father Lacombe spent in superintending the putting in of a grain crop and the building of a grist mill which he had brought across the plains by Red River cart, the year before, and had erected and operated with considerable difficulty. It was the first horse-power mill in the West. (1)

Lord Milton and Dr. Cheadle,who visited Edmonton in 1863 on their way to the Rocky Mountains, were quite impressed with the farming operations at St. Albert Mission,but made no mention in their journal of any such activity around the Fort. These travellers called on Father Lacombe, were invited to dine with him and afterwards were shown the sights of the Mission. The fine cornfields and the large number of horses and herds of cattle were a surprise to them and came in for favourable comment as did also the Reverend Father's efforts in improving the breeding of the animals and his bringing into the country under difficulties and at great expense plows and other farm implements. They also noted the corn mill in process of erection,which was to be worked by horse-power. (2)

(1) Hughes,Katherine,Father Lacombe,New York, 1914, p 84ff.

(2) Milton and Cheadle,The North-West Passage by Land,London, 9th ed., p 181.

James Gibbons,an old timer, who came to Edmonton with a group of miners in 1865,when the news of Clover's discovery of gold in the Saskatchewan river attracted so many, has given his impressions of the place on his arrival. "In 1865 oats were grown on the Hudson's Bay field where the present power-house now stands and potatoes had been grown on the same ground some eighty years previously. This was the talk of the men around the Fort. The oats had been very light owing to the in-breeding and the potatoes from the same cause were not much bigger than my fingers. I found potatoes,barley and oats growing in Edmonton in 1865, the barley was the best crop. A bag of potatoes and a bag of flour was the Hudson's Bay Company's ration to each man. There was another field just behind the present Hudson's Bay store which was called the 'new field'. This field afterwards became the race track. The Hudson's Bay Company had also a horse-power flour mill for grinding. They had also cattle-sixty-five good milch cows-and grew their own beef and oxen; the latter were used to draw the old-fashioned Red River carts. In those days hay was cut with a scythe and raked with a hand-rake."(1)

Until a little later than 1870 the buffalo,which was the staple article of food, could be found in quantities not more than fifty miles south of the Fort. Settlers were few: the

(1) Griesbach,Major General W.A., The Story of Jim Gibbons,Oldest Old-Timer in Alberta, dictated to General Griesbach by Mr.Gibbons, published in Edmonton Bulletin,February 18th, 1927.

small holdings of the half-breeds were farmed in a half-hearted, inefficient way and to no great extent. The interest of the Fort being primarily fur-trading no care was taken in the tilling of the soil other than the growing of potatoes and other vegetables on a limited scale.

In speaking of the farming activities in the Edmonton settlement, when he first came to the place, the Honourable Frank Oliver has given the following description- "A farm which grew potatoes and barley was carried on on the flat south and west of the Fort. Later on, land was farmed by the Hudson's Bay Company where the Canadian National Railway tracks and yards now are. Cattle,pigs and fowls were kept and garden vegetables raised."(1)

"On the road to St. Albert there were four or five men, old gold-miners,who had strayed across the mountains and taken up land- Big Majeau, George Gagnon,Edmond Juneau,Dan Noyes, Leon Harniwell and Pascal Marechal. These men had taken land along this highway on this side of the height of land from which one first gets a view of St. Albert. They were cultivating the land and had built themselves comfortable homes. Then there was a stretch of road with no settlers until one got to the farms around the St. Albert settlement."(2)

(1) Oliver, Hon. Frank, article in Edmonton Bulletin, September 17th,1921.

(2) Information given to the writer personally by Hon. Frank Oliver,August,1931.

From reminiscences of these early days given by Honourable Frank Oliver on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Edmonton Exhibition one gets a vivid word picture of some of the pioneer settlers who were here on his arrival and of conditions at the time- "Truly we were a people apart but we were here as pioneers not as exiles. There were amongst us some real people-Will Cust, California,Cariboo and Peace River gold miner and fur-trader,the first man to undertake farming in the district as a business enterprise. He brought a self-binder up the river by steamer from Winnipeg at the time wire was used for binding sheaves,before the cord binder was invented; Tom Smith,fur-trader,formerly of Fallowfield, near Ottawa, who hauled a steam thresher across the plains from Winnipeg by ox-team in a season when trails were particularly bad; Lamoureux brothers ,who built and operated a grist-mill on the Sturgeon river; Donald Ross, gold miner, from Omenica, who began market-gardening on what afterwards became the Ross estate and who developed coal mining as a side line and operated the only hotel west of Portage la Prairie; Messrs. McLeod,Morris and Belcher,who built a steam saw and grist-mill on the Riverdale flats."(1)

The extent to which agriculture flourished in Edmonton and district in the early '70's is very definitely set forth in some of the very early issues of the settlement's first newspaper.

(1) Oliver,Honourable Frank, an address on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the opening of the Edmonton Exhibition. Edmonton Bulletin, July,1929.

"When the Mounted Police arrived in Edmonton in 1874 the number of acres under cultivation around it could be easily counted on one's fingers. Big Lake (1) could boast of a few farms along with that of the Mission and, where Fort Saskatchewan now stands was as free from any signs of civilization as any part of the Saskatchewan river west of Edmonton is today. Long Lake had about half a dozen small farmers, who after leaving the Hudson's Bay Company's service settled down to that life which they foresaw was to become the leading occupation of the country." (2)

Before 1877,agricultural machinery was almost unknown. The scythe and the cradle were the implements used followed by the flail or threshing by horses. There was no grist mill. During the next few years the farm machinery consisted of -"one steam-saw,shingle and threshing machine, one self-binding harvester, one ten-horse power threshing machine, eleven reaping machines, ten mowing machines, ten sulky hay-rakes, seventy-three plows, eleven fanning mills and nineteen iron and wooden harrows. This importation represented a value of $16,000. delivered in Edmonton and all of the articles had to be brought in underhigh freight rates by ox-cart over one thousand miles of bad roads." (3)

The Hudson's Bay Company had at an early date established a small grist mill on the south side of the Saskatchewan river but

(1) Just beyond the present St. Albert village.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin,December 20th,1880.

(3) Ibid.

towards the end of the year 1880 it was superseded by a large fifty horse-power steam saw and grist mill near the Fort and about the same period three citizens- Messrs. D. McLeod,John Norris and R. Belcher erected a twenty-five horse-power steam saw and grist mill on the Riverdale flats, having brought in the machinery from Winnipeg up the Saskatchewan by Hudson's Bay Company steamer in the summer of 1879. The timbers for the mill were cut in the winter of 1879 and 1880 and the structure was erected and the machinery installed during the following summer, the mill being ready for use in the fall of that year. (1) The Sturgeon River district's needs were looked after by a mill built and operated by Lamoureux brothers.

The settlers for miles around brought in their grain to Edmonton to be ground. Abraham Spleyn from the Battle River settlement, fifty miles away,brought the first grist to the Edmonton mills on Saturday,December 6th,1880. He got as a result thirty-one bushels of barley. The charge for gristing was a toll from the tenth to the twelfth bushel.(2) The gristings of native wheat resulted in a dark,very solid loaf of bread to which the housewife's appellation of "sad" could be fittingly applied. "When I first came in 1876", said the Honourable Frank Oliver,"wheat flour was a luxury not a necessity and sold at fifteen dollars to twenty dollars per hundred pound

(1) Editorial in Edmonton Bulletin,December 16th,1895.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin,December 20th,1880.

sack, when there was any of it sold,which was only at intervals. Oats grown at Swan River, Montana, were imported and freighted across the country by Red River cart.....The first night I slept in a house in this district the owner and his wife sat down to a dinner of boiled muskrat and 'lady-finger' potatoes and were especially fortunate in having the potatoes. The lady-finger potatoes might be described as the smallest of small potatoes and few in a hill. The staple food of the country was buffalo meat and white-fish."(1)

In 1880, 1881 and 1882,in the expectation of early railroad construction through the Yellowhead Pass, which meant railway facilities for the Edmonton district, many new settlers came in and took up land with the intention of farming. In the year 1881-82 the number of farms along the Sturgeon increased from two to twenty. By the fall of 1882,great progress from an agricultural standpoint had been made in the settlement,crops were flourishing and a considerable quantity of farm machinery had been brought in as evinced by a statement appearing in the Bulletin of November of that year- "Today,four threshing machines one of them a steamer are insufficient to thresh out the season's crop, two grist mills each with two run of stones are kept running day and night and on every hand are seen reapers and mowers,plows,harrows,wagons and horse-teams. Comfortable houses

(1) Oliver, Hon. Frank, address on the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Edmonton Exhibition,Edmonton Bulletin, July,1929.

and well-fed stock are to be found,where only five years ago the main dependence of the place was on the buffalo hunt."(1)

An interesting account is to be found in one of the issues of the Bulletin in the summer of 1882 of the agricultural activities of the pioneer Big Lake (2) farmer,Mr. William Cust, who was the first man in the district to undertake farming as a business enterprise and who seemed to be looked upon as the big farmer of the district- "W. Cust finished seeding on the 31st of May,twenty-one days earlier than last year. He has two hundred and eighty acres of grain crop in and five acres of roots. Forty acres of the land sown is spring breaking,harrowed nine times. Wheat occupies one hundred and forty-five acres,barley one hundred and twenty-three and oats twelve. The first of the wheat was sown on the 22nd of April and the whole of the land was ploughed this spring. Four horses and four ox-teams were employed on the work. The four teams of horses ploughed one hundred and forty acres in fourteen days on an average of two and a half acres per day for each team. Cust himself sowed twenty-five bushels of grain a day with one hand for nine consecutive days,excepting Sunday-- not bad for a man nearly sixty years of age."(3)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin,November 6th,1882.

(2) Big Lake is rather a misleading name for the small lake which lies due west of St. Albert.

(3) Edmonton Bulletin, June 3rd,1882.

The energy and optimism of the early pioneers resulted in the formation of an Agricultural Society and the holding of the first agricultural show in the fall of 1879. The officers of this society were: President, Lt.-Col. Jarvis, Vice-President, Factor R. Hardisty, Secretary,George Verey. The directorate consisted of twelve men, three from Edmonton,three from St. Albert, three from Fort Saskatchewan and three from other nearby settlements such as the Lower Settlement, which is now the Highlands, and Clover Bar. The names of the Edmonton officials were: Captain Gagnon,Sergeant-Major Belcher and Donald Ross. "It was a humble and patriotic effort by the pioneers of Edmonton and surrounding settlements," said the Honourable Frank Oliver, in describing the first agricultural exhibition in the North-West. (1) The sum of $150 was given in prizes and also a sum in special prizes. After all expenses had been met,there was a balance in the treasury of $55 which was sent in the winter of 1880 for new varieties of field and garden seeds, such as could be procured by mail. The seeds,however, did not arrive in time for sowing, owing to the irregularities of the mail. 1880 also proved to be a bad season and interest in the society grew less and less until it finally became a dead letter. (2)

In the interval between this first exhibition and 1882, agricultural conditions had made material progress in the district. Once or twice there was a feeble,half-hearted attempt to do something again in the way of an agricultural show but nothing came of it.

(1) Oliver, Hon. Frank, from an address on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Edmonton Exhibition,Edmonton Bulletin, July, 1929.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, September 9th, 1882.

By the summer of 1882, public opinion, helped on by that indefatigable pioneer, the editor of the Bulletin, had reached the stage where it was felt that an exhibition should once more be attempted. The assurances of support being reasonably satisfactory an organization meeting was held in the public school house on Wednesday, September 27th, and was attended by about forty residents of the immediate neighborhood. Mr. D. Maloney was made chairman and having been on the executive of an agricultural society in Manitoba before coming to Edmonton explained how agricultural societies were conducted there. The election of officers for the Edmonton Agricultural Society resulted as follows- D. Maloney, President, J. Reid, first vice-president, W. Cust, second vice-president, Secretary-Treasurer, W. Stiff; directors- M. McCauley, M. McLeod, W.S. Robertson, A. Taylor, G. Gagnon, A.D. Patton and J. Fraser. Subscriptions were called for by the chairman and $58 was subscribed immediately of which $48 was paid in. Thereupon the directors held a meeting and decided to hold an exhibition on Thursday, October 19th. Mr. W. S. Robertson offered the use of A. Macdonald's new building for the purpose. A further meeting of the directors was held at Mr. Mulkin's office on Wednesday, October 4th, at which the details of the prize list were decided upon, the prizes offered amounting to $328. Subscriptions were reported as coming in satisfactorily, $207 having been subscribed to date. (1)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, September 30th, 1882.

Thursday,October 19th,1882, was an eventful day for the little settlement on the North Saskatchewan. All the Edmonton world at least made holiday. "Work was suspended in town all or nearly all day and between two hundred and three hundred people came in from the surrounding country to see the show. Entries began to be made early in the morning but owing to the distance some of the exhibits had to be brought all were not in until noon. Altogether,there were one hundred and eight entries. A. Macdonald and Company's new hotel served as an agricultural hall, Donald McLeod's corral held the loose stock, the oxen, pigs and poultry were tied or piled around promiscuously , the horses were pranced up and down the main street in front of the building,the crowd disposed of themselves each as they thought best and the whole affair had a free and easy air refreshingly different from the usual appearance of such affairs in other places where iron-clad rule and pugnacious petty authority held sway. The show of horses and horned stock began immediately after dinner and at the same time a mixed commission of ladies and gentlemen decided on the merits of the articles in the hall. The different classes for which prizes were offered were as follows: Agricultural horses,saddle horses, carriage horses, native horses, team horses, cart horses; Durham cattle including yoke oxen; sheep; poultry; field grains, field roots and vegetables; preserved fruit, jams, pickles, etc.;dairy products; home-made woollen goods; needle work; leather and leather work.

"Competition in Class I,agricultural horses,was not very keen. The section in which there was most competition was that of carriage horses there being four or five entries and all the animals looked very well. In Class II, native horses, the competition was keener and the team and saddle horses were fair samples but the display of cart horses was certainly poor in comparison to what the country could produce. In Class III, Durham cattle, D. Maloney was the only exhibitor in all sections except that of cows in which James Lauder showed two good specimens. In Classes VI and VII, pigs and poultry, there were very few exhibits ,probably because the prizes offered were not considered large enough for the trouble entailed but what were shown were very good.

"In field grain,seeds,roots and vegetables,the exhibits were more numerous than in the other classes but the crowd was so great at the time which the articles were allowed to remain on exhibition that visitors had very little chance to pass opinions on these articles or on other exhibits in the hall. A large exhibit of wheat was expected but the previous bad weather had prevented the threshing and very little was on exhibition. J. Reid showed some Rio Grande wheat,a large hard bright grain but not so well thought of as Red Fife. The wheat shown by the Roman Catholic Mission weighed sixty-six pounds to the bushel and their barley which took second prize weighed fifty-seven pounds. The corn showed by the Roman Catholic Mission and John Rowland was fully ripened and well formed. The name

of the variety is not known but is a particularly early kind. The seed was imported from Sun River ,Montana. The Early Rose potato exhibited by the Roman Catholic Mission went forty-five to the bushel and six turnips by them averaged fifteen pounds apiece. The pumpkins grown at Lac St. Ann,which took first prize,were fully ripe,weighed twenty-one pounds and measured forty inches around. In garden vegetables the onions were simply immense and the tomatoes exhibited by D. Ross were of a very large size but only part of them were ripe. The show of preserved fruit was very small when the abundance and many kinds of wild fruit is considered. The show of butter was first class. The home-made bread was as good as could be produced anywhere; even that from native flour was excellent in quality,although rather dark in appearance. "(1) In this connection,in addition to the regular prize,the society had offered a special prize of two dollars for the best home-made bread made by a girl under fourteen years of age and this was won by Miss Rhoda Anderson.

"The part of the hall devoted to ladies work was tastefully arranged. Around the walls alternating with other exhibits were dark beaver skins which helped to give a rich appearance to the whole. In home-made woollen goods the principal exhibits were socks,stockings and mittens and they were certainly a credit to the makers. One pair of stockings,shown by D. Maloney, was from home-grown wool,

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, October 21st,1882.

carded and spun by hand. The bead work, silk work, embroidery, fancy knitting, etc. were all first class, the most notable article perhaps being an altar cloth of gold embroidery on muslin exhibited by the Roman Catholic Mission. The silk work on mocassins and gloves was also very noticeable for tasty design and perfection of finish.

"The first prize for a beadwork saddle cloth went to Mrs. G. Donald and that for a red deer skin jacket to Mrs. W. McKay. In leather work, the first prize for a dressed moose skin went to F.D.Wilson and that for men's fancy mocassins to the Roman Catholic Mission.

"As many of the exhibitors lived at a distance ,they were obliged to remove their exhibits early so that the exhibition was over about four o'clock in the afternoon."(1)

The general impression of the net results of the venture from the point of view of the community was voiced through the medium of the settlement's weekly newspaper in the shape of an interesting editorial entitled,"The Show":

"The Show was a great success. The showing of roots and garden vegetables proved the possibilities of growing varieties of potatoes,large and of unsurpassed quality; seed onions could not be beaten; pumpkins and corn although not very large were perfectly ripe and good. But while the grain and vegetables show what the country could produce in these lines;the exhibition of live-stock showed what it lacked in that department. The region with healthy

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, October 21st,1882.

climate and luxurious pasturage and immense quantities of hay is suitable for stock raising. The stock at the exhibition was not what might reasonably be expected in such a favoured region. The reason is partly the great difficulty and expense connected with getting in improved stock and partly that the farmers have been obliged to attend more to their grain than to their stock, the former giving them quicker returns although the latter is in the end more profitable.. ..... By showing up productions as well as shortcomings of the country the exhibition has caused an amount of interest to be taken in agriculture and agricultural products that did not before exist and has made the profession of farming assume an importance in the minds of the people equal to what it actually occupies in the economy of their lives. Those who took prizes are anxious to excel again and those who did not exhibit are determined to show what they can do next year so that we may reasonably look for an improved system of farming as one of the results of the past exhibition."(1)

Having made a good start with the exhibition held in the fall of 1882, the experiment was successfully repeated in 1883 and in subsequent years down to the present day.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, October 28th, 1882.

CHAPTER X

Social Life in the Early Days

In common with other fur-trading posts life at Fort Edmonton in the early days must have been monotonous in the extreme. The small numbers living in such close proximity and the complete isolation were not conducive to much variety of amusement to wile away the leisure hours. Tastes were simple,however, and the most was made of the resources at hand.

Dog-racing was one of the favorite pastimes in the early days. Large numbers of the animals were kept at the post and were extensively used for travelling in winter and by traders. Great was the rivalry among the owners of dog-teams as to their appearance,staying qualities and speed. The French half-breeds and traders around the post spent much time and a goodly portion of their resources on the furbelows and accoutrements for their dogs and carioles. Alexander Ross, to whom one is indebted for much of the detail giving an insight into the life around the trading posts during the Hudson's Bay Company's regime,was inclined to discount the usefulness of the dogs and to put down their retention in such numbers as a nuisance that might

well be dispensed with. On the occasion of his visit to Fort Edmonton in 1825 the number of "snarling curs" seems to have attracted his attention particularly- "An abominable custom is very prevalent among the traders on this side of the mountains and Edmonton is entitled to her own share of odium- keeping so many starving dogs about the establishment in summer for their imaginary services in winter. There were no less than fifty-two snarling and growling curs; and they are said to be very useful and profitable animals ..... During bygone days the emulation among men for dogs as runners was so great that all their hard-earned earnings were spent on them; and the tawdry paraphernalia required to ornament a first-rate train was as expensive as it was foolish: the wife might go without her blanket; but the husband must have his dogs and the dogs their scarlet ribbons and their bells ..... These animals are generally of the wolf breed and are said to be vigorous and long-winded. They are not generally reared about the establishment but purchased from the natives for a mere trifle when young; when trained they sell among the whites as high as five pounds sterling- double the price of a horse and sometimes higher according to fancy."(1)

(1) Ross, Alexander, Fur Hunters of the Far West, London, 1855, v II,p 212.

In the early days horse-racing was another form of recreation in great favour and much indulged in at the various posts. The young men of the forts were wont to spend their leisure hours in galloping their animals to the point of exhaustion, doubtless wagering with their fellow companions the bulk of their meagre earnings on the outcome. Indulgence in this pastime is mentioned in the Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray in an entry dated Fort George, May 11th, 1795: "The day of our departure being now at hand we indulged ourselves in all the amusements of this place- such as riding and hunting- yesterday morning a band of forty cavaliers issued out of the Fort and after having raced our horses till they were quite exhausted we changed them for fresh ones at the fort and fatigued them in the same manner. Bets ran high: fathoms of strouds and scarfs and even horse against horse were often proposed and accepted by the men." (1) Again we are indebted to Alexander Ross for the fact that horse-racing was a favourite pastime at Fort Edmonton. He, as a member of Governor Simpson's party, sojourned at the post for a few days in the year 1825.

(1) Morton, Professor A.S., ed.-The Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray of the North-West Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794-95, Toronto, 1929, p 78.

He enjoyed a gallop around the race course on Factor Rowand's favourite steed and of this occurrence he wrote: "Adjoining the cultivated fields is a very fine level race ground of two miles or more in length; horse-racing being one of the chief amusements of the place during the summer season. Mr. Rowand, a man of active habits, good humour and fond of riding and racing as a pastime, keeps some of the best horses the country can produce and we were favoured with a specimen of them. I rode around the race grounds a chestnut sixteen hands high and very spirited. I must not fail to observe what has already been said on the subject of horses that many of them both for size and muscle were as fine animals as ever I had seen in the country." (1)

The fur-trading posts in their isolated situation, cut off from much intercourse with the outside, warmly welcomed and most hospitably received all travellers. Their coming was the occasion for as much merry-making as the resources of the place would permit. Dancing was the entertainment generally offered. It was customary to give a ball when an especially distinguished guest came to the fort. On the occasion of the visit of Governor Simpson to Fort Edmonton in 1841 such a fete was given in his honour. The event seems to have

(1) Ross, Alexander, Fur Hunters of the Far West, London, 1855, v II, p 210ff.

favourably impressed Alexander Ross, a member of the party, and from his pen we get the following description: "I had often heard that the females of the Fort des Prairies were celebrated for their attractions and I must say that the report had not in the least degree exaggerated their accomplishments. Modest and unassuming they dressed well, danced well and made a good show of fineries. In short, the whole affair was conducted with much good taste and decorum."(1) From the diary of a member of the Redgrave party, one of the various groups of "Overlanders of '62", there is obtained a description of a ball given for them at Fort Edmonton on August 8th,1862- "We had a ball in a large room of the Fort on the night of our arrival; the ladies were the half-breed wives of the men of the Fort and the dances were all reels,etc.,danced with great spirit. When you wanted a partner you never spoke(of course that would have been of no use) but you touched any of the women and walked off to your place and presently the partner chosen would walk up to your side; after the dance the gentleman walked to his seat and the lady to hers."(2) From this account it is apparent that the fair sex of the establishment were not accustomed to much gallantry from the male members.

(1) Ross, Alexander,Fur Hunters of the Far West, London, 1855, v II, p 209.

(2) Wade,M.S.,The Overlanders of "62,Memoir No IX, Archives Publications of the Province of British Columbia, Toronto, 1931, edited by John Hosie, Provincial Librarian of British Columbia.

In the late '70's and early '80's,when from merely a trading post Edmonton was rapidly taking on the semblance of a settlement,the variety of amusements grew greater with the increasing number and versatility of the settlers. While dog-racing was a thing of the past the popularity of horse-racing did not wane. There were numerous instances of the indulgence of this pastime mentioned in the Bulletin issues of those days. There was a race track somewhat north of the present Hudson's Bay store. Here, during the long summer evenings horse-racing was carried on with great zest. Such sports as cricket,football and lacrosse were very popular. In the fall of 1881 both a cricket club and an athletic association were organized with the idea of being ready to make an early start the next season. During the winter months skating on the Saskatchewan River was a popular form of amusement for old and young and a great deal of pleasure was derived from the numerous skating parties. Dancing and dances were still as popular as of yore and minstrel shows were also frequent. The following is an account of a Masonic ball given in the settlement in December 1881:

"A Masonic ball given on Tuesday evening,December 20th, in McDougall Hall was undoubtedly the best affair of the season. The assembled masons and their guests numbered fifty-six and everyone appeared to be in a gay humour. The supper served in the Lauderdale house was excellent in every particular. Dancing was resumed after supper and kept up with one intermission until five o'clock in the morning. Prominent among the dances was the Highland schottische in which three couples figured and received merited applause. The programme also included the quadrille, cotillion, reel, waltz, galop and various other dances. Fifteen members of the order took part in the affair. Not the least remarkable feature was the number of ladies- sixteen, the largest number that has been got together at any affair of the kind in Edmonton within the memory of man or of which there is any authentic record. As our fashion reporter is away we are unable to speak critically of the costumes of the ladies or of the gentlemen,suffice to say that although only one gentleman appeared in a claw-hammer coat, there was more lace,frilling,kid gloves, black cloth,starched linen and store clothes generally, not forgetting a few police uniforms,at this ball than could have been collected in any previous year in the whole Saskatchewan country." (1)

The red-coated mounties of Fort Saskatchewan gave a minstrel show in the winter of 1882 it being held in the barracks building.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, December 24th,1881.

"Invitations had been issued to nearly every person in the country and almost all responded. As most of the guests were from a distance refreshments were served at six o'clock in the evening after which the performance commenced. The room was decorated with evergreens and flags and looked well. A number of seats had been arranged which were altogether occupied by the ladies while the men were obliged to stand as the crowd was so dense there was not room for sitting down. Besides those in the building a large number were unable to squeeze into it at all. The interest was well kept up throughout the performance. The songs, recitations, farces and dances all received merited applause. Considerable fun was taken out of different Edmonton parties and the claim-jumping episode came in for its full share. As soon as the minstrel performance ended,the room was cleared for dancing which was kept up with vigour till daylight. Supper was served at midnight and breakfast at six in the morning after which the crowd dispersed. About three hundred people were present,the largest number yet seen at an affair of the kind in the country."(1)

The first church social ever held in Edmonton was that under the auspices of the ladies of the newly organized Presbyterian church as a welcome to their first pastor, Rev. A.B.Baird. It was held in McDougall hall on Thursday evening, November 24th,1881. After the bountiful high tea,provided by the ladies, the Rev. Dr. Newton,Anglican clergyman,delivered an address of welcome on behalf

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, February 11th,1882.

of himself and the congregation and also gave a talk on the duties of people towards their minister. The recently appointed minister expressed his appreciation of the welcome accorded him which was followed by a varied programme of vocal and instrumental music, brought to a close by a selection by the choir, entitled, "What shall the Harvest Be?" No doubt the hymn was selected with unconscious humour but it was nevertheless very appropriate for the inception of the pastorate of a new minister. The rendition of the national anthem brought to a close Edmonton's first church social. (1)

The Indian gatherings and ceremonies held from time to time were other items of interest and amusement for the settlement. The most important and spectacular of these was the Ooh-ne-pah-qua-see-moo-we-kaj-muk or Thirst Dance of the Crees. It was held on the flat below the Fort and was as a matter of fact the only one which the Indians in the vicinity of Edmonton observed as late as the '80's.

The Thirst Dance was not held periodically but merely at common request under the supervision of a medicine man. The ceremony was the occasion of fasting, thirsting, dancing and sacrificing in the redemption of vows. It was customary with the Indians when faced with trouble or danger in time of war to make a vow to the Thunder Spirit, the terrible one whose favour they were especially anxious to secure, that if they should come through safely they would on the occasion of the next Thirst ceremonial do a form of penance by making certain

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, November 26th, 1881.

offerings, or undergoing certain sufferings for being extricated from their predicament. The degree of suffering or the severity of the torture was supposed to be regulated by the extent of the danger and the depth of gratitude for being rescued therefrom. A person who promised penance might be released from his vow by making presents of sufficient value.

At the Thirst Dance which was held in Edmonton in early July of 1882 "the chiefs attending with part of their bands were: Pah-pa-stay-ow of Edmonton, Bobtail, Ermine Skin and Sampson of Peace Hills, Kats-ta-wis-kum of Lac la Nonne, Ma-me-now-wah-tow of Stony Plain and some of the Indians from Pigeon Lake. There were about sixty tents present. The Medicine Man was Wah-see-koo-toos or Shining Elbow of Egg Lake near Victoria. The women began practising on Friday, June 29th, and on Tuesday the medicine tent was erected with great ceremony. The poles for the frame were cut down amid much singing, shooting and shouting and dragged to the place by both men and women. As leather was scarce, young trees were used for the sides of the tent which was about fifty feet across. It was in reality merely a circle of young poplars with all their leaves on, placed close together and leaning inwards at an angle of forty-five degrees, so as to shelter the dancers and spectators from the sun and wind. In the centre of the tent or circle a large stout pole was erected from which were hung the presents offered to the Thunder Spirit in whose honour the dance was held. The Thunder Spirit is supposed to be a large bird who shoots his arrows at the earth, the thunder being the sound

produced by the arrows flying through the air.

"Around nearly one half of the tent a few feet from the wall a partition was formed,about waist high, of young leafy poplars and behind this the dancers were ranged, the men in one part and the women in the other. Over the partition banners were hung on which devices representing the Thunder Spirit, the buffalo and other things were roughly drawn. The dancers to the number of twenty women and five men were ornamented as hideously as possible and most of them had goose-bone whistles which they blew while dancing. In front of where the waiting dancers sat and outside the partition, the drummers were seated on the ground. Half the space of the tent on the side of the pole where the dancers had taken up their position was sacred to the use of believers while the other half was for spectators from the settlement at a charge of fifty cents admission.

"The dancers were allowed to sit while the music stopped but as long as the drums kept going the dancers had to keep going too. They were not supposed to eat,drink or rest other than by squatting down, when the music ceased,for the forty-eight hours while the dance lasted.

"The dance commenced Tuesday evening,July 4th, at sundown. On Wednesday,Indian Jack and Tah-koots of Pah-pa-stay-ow's band were pierced with awls through the flesh of the breast,little sticks were then put through and strings fastened from them to the top of the pole. The two men then danced round leaning back on the strings. Tah-koots afterwards made a speech and presented a horse which was

taken by Bobtail. The day was very hot and two of the dancers had to give up so the Medicine Man decided to bring rain. At noon he started smoking and pointing with his pipe stem to three sides of the sky. There was not a cloud at the time but he said it would rain that afternoon and before six o'clock a smart shower came up which revived the thirsty ones. It rained again heavily during the night but he did not hold himself responsible for that. On Thursday, Kah-koo-see-was whose eyes were very weak last spring went through the same performance as Tah-koots,having vowed to do so if he got better. In the afternoon there was a war dance and a great deal of shooting at very close quarters. The feast ended on Thursday evening and the whole business wound up on Friday evening." (1)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, July 8th, 1882.

CHAPTER XI

Election of a Representative to the North-West Council

With the incorporation of Rupert's Land in the Dominion of Canada provision had to be made for the administration of this newly acquired territory. A small portion of the vast North-West under the name of Manitoba was given responsible government ,receiving a lieutenant-governor, a legislative assembly and all the other political institutions of a province of the Dominion. As to the rest of the territory the Dominion parliament passed in 1872 an act providing for the administration of the North-West by the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba and an appointed Council of not more than fifteen members to be known as the North-West Council. This was but a temporary expedient,however, and the North-West Territories Act passed in 1875 completely separated the government of the territories from that of Manitoba. The Honourable David Laird was appointed first lieutenant-governor of the North-West Territories and with him was associated a council partly appointed and partly elected. Five members were appointed by the Governor-in-Council but,under the provisions of the act,when an area of one thousand square miles had attained a population of one thousand white persons it was to be constituted an electoral district with the right to choose a member for the North-West Council.

A census was taken in the Edmonton and neighboring settlements in 1880 to ascertain if the population was sufficient to entitle the district to representation. The returns gave the adult population of Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan as two hundred and seventy-five. Edmonton had two hundred and fifty. There were fifty houses in the settlement, exclusive of the Hudson's Bay Company's fort, which was described as a small town in itself. The result being disappointing, the community had to await patiently the incoming of more settlers. In December of 1882, another census was taken- "Colonel Richardson has been authorized to collect evidence as to the population of the Edmonton district in order to see if we are entitled to representation in the North-West Council. Action will be be taken in the matter on his recommendation."(1) The outcome of the investigation this time was more encouraging as evidenced from a statement in the press at that date- "The proposed electoral division of Edmonton will contain twenty-eight townships..... this will take in all the settlements adjoining Edmonton proper, has an area of a little over one thousand square miles and is supposed to contain a population of one thousand adults. Reverend Père Leduc of St. Albert, Captain Gagnon of Fort Saskatchewan and S. D. Mulkins, late census commissioner of Edmonton, testified that in their opinion the tract designated contained the requisite number of adults to

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, December 9th, 1882.

entitle it to representation in the North-West Council. This statement and a plan of the district was taken east by Colonel Richardson and will be laid by him before the Lieutenant-Governor ,who will take such action as he may see fit in the matter."(1)

The hoped for result was attained and the settlement was made jubilant by a telegraphic announcement from Winnipeg, dated March 12th,1883, to the effect that a proclamation erecting Edmonton into an electoral district had been published with the boundaries as set forth in the petition submitted. The boundaries were roughly to include the settlements from Rivière Qui Barre on the west to a point below the mouth of the Sturgeon on the east, a distance of forty-four miles in length and from a point six miles south of Edmonton to the most northerly point of the Sturgeon river settlement on the north, a distance of thirty miles at its greatest breadth.(2)

The writs for the election of a member to the North-West Council arrived by mail and were duly posted up together with the clause from the Ordinance giving the qualifications of a voter-"that he must be twenty-one years of age, a British subject but not a treaty Indian, a householder, and have resided within the district for twelve months immediately preceding the date of the issue of the writs."(3)

Before nomination day, which was set for Tuesday,May 15th, several citizens announced their candidature through the columns of

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, December 23rd,1882.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, April 7th,1883.

(3) Edmonton Bulletin, May 5th,1883.

the Bulletin and proceeded on an electioneering campaign. The first meeting was held in the school house on Thursday evening, May 10th, with Mr. W. Stiff in the chair. The following candidates addressed the meeting: Mr. M. McCauley, Mr. Frank Oliver and Mr. S. D. Mulkins. After the candidates had spoken, a somewhat lengthy and acrimonious discussion took place participated in by the candidates and their supporters. Finally, an open vote as to the popularity of the respective candidates was taken resulting in twelve for McCauley, forty-two for Oliver and twenty-two for Mulkins.(1) Mr. F. Lamoureux, a resident of Fort Saskatchewan, subsequently announced his candidature, claiming that at a meeting at St. Albert he had been asked to be their representative.(2)

In due course Captain Gagnon, the returning officer, gave notice that the constituency had been divided into the three polling divisions of Edmonton, St. Albert and Fort Saskatchewan. The polling for Edmonton was to be held at the school house. "In a general way this division included all the settlement on the south side from and including Clover Bar upwards and on the north side all the river adjoining settlements from C. Chahle's place upwards."(3)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, May 12th, 1883.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, May 12th, 1883.

(3) Edmonton Bulletin, May 19th, 1883.

For the St. Albert poll the vote was to be cast at the house of the keeper of the St. Albert bridge: this division was to take in besides the St. Albert settlement some of the settlers on the Horse Hill plain and north of the Little Mountain, part of those on the St. Albert road, some of those at Long Lake and the Sturgeon River settlement as far down as the mill. The polling for the Fort Saskatchewan division was to take place in McNicol and Chamberlayne's store at Fort Saskatchewan. This district comprised the settlement around Fort Saskatchewan on both sides of the river as far west as and including C. Chahle's place and that around the Sturgeon River mill. (1)

The nomination meeting,held on Tuesday, May 15th, was largely attended, upwards of one hundred being present. The returning officer, after observing the usual preliminaries , declared that the nominations had been made in due form of the following: F. Lamoureux, F. Oliver and S. D. Mulkins. Mr. M. McCauley,who earlier had announced his candidature, had withdrawn from the field. Captain Gagnon then called for a show of hands for the different candidates, the result being in favour of Mr. Oliver. However, his two opponents immediately demanded a poll which was appointed to take place on the 29th instant, according to the announcement already made.(2)

A political meeting was then held before the crowd dispersed each candidate speaking in the order of his nomination.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, May 19th,1883.

(2) Ibid.

From the various views expressed it was evident that the speakers had a common platform. All declared that schools should be aided, roads improved and the whole district assisted as much as possible with the limited funds that might be obtained from the North-West Council. All made the same promises- to work for the district as a whole and not for any one section. Mr. Oliver was vigorously attacked by Mr. Bleeker who stated that he could prove from the Bulletin files that Mr. Oliver was inconsistent and changed his opinions to catch votes. He then read extracts from that journal to show that the editor had made very critical and pointed remarks with regard to the government's attitude towards the Syndicate ,(1) the administration of Indian Commissioner Dewdney, land speculation, etc. all of which showed that Oliver desired the destruction of the C.P.R. and the North-West in general. Mr. Oliver, in defending himself, claimed that he had never written against the government as a government but against different points in its policy relating to the North-West; that he had not opposed the C.P.R. but took strong exception to the Syndicate bargain and would continue to do so.(2) "He was much obliged to Mr. Bleeker for having read so much from the Bulletin to the meeting and for his remarks in regard to it. The reading was quite unnecessary,however, as the majority of those present read it for themselves and were perfectly competent to pass judgment upon it without any outside assistance."(3)

(1) This was the Canadian Pacific Syndicate. It had been formed in 1880 to build and operate the Canadian Pacific railway.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, May 19th,1883.

(3) Ibid.

Election meetings were also held at St. Albert and Fort Saskatchewan at which the three candidates addressed the electorate.

As the campaign waxed warm attempts were made among the adherents of the candidates to stir up sectional and religious feeling. The voters'list posted showed the Edmonton division to contain one hundred and thirty-eight names, St. Albert about one hundred and twenty-eight, and Fort Saskatchewan about thirty-seven.

The eventful day at last arrived: the following account of the day's proceedings of the first political election held in Edmonton was given in the Bulletin issue of June 2nd,1883: "Tuesday last was all that could be desired for an election day as far as the weather and the roads were concerned. Although there was considerable bitter feeling it was not expressed at the polling stations, and taken altogether the proceedings were very quiet and orderly. The poll at Edmonton opened precisely at nine o'clock in the school house. J. A. Macrae acted as deputy returning officer and W.A. Edsall as poll clerk. L. Gurneau was agent for Lamoureux and T. Henderson for Oliver. No agent appeared for Mulkins. The voting proceeded very quietly all forenoon and at twelve o'clock the count stood sixty-two for Oliver, two for Mulkins and one for Lamoureux. As no votes were coming in at twelve o'clock the poll was closed for a hour. When business was resumed at one o'clock, it seemed that an arrangement had been arrived at between the supporters of Messrs. Mulkins and Lamoureux for during the beginning

of the afternoon the former warm supporters of Mulkins ran Lamoureux's count up to seven, then fourteen, and finally fifteen, where it stood at the close of the poll. Mr. Mulkins received one vote during the afternoon,making a total of three in the Edmonton division. When it became apparent that his principal supporters had turned in favour of Lamoureux.....others of them gave their votes for Oliver. News from St. Albert,which arrived at 2.30 p.m. ,that at one o'clock Oliver was fourteen ahead of Lamoureux in that division had a depressing effect on the friends of the latter and they gave up further efforts at the Edmonton polling station. About half past four o'clock,Messrs. Norris,Logan and Gibbons arrived from St. Albert with the news that the count stood fifty-six for Oliver and forty-seven for Lamoureux. This entirely settled the question as to who was elected and as the time for closing the poll approached no one had anything to say for there was nothing to be said. Both sides had fought wickedly and one was most unmistakenly whipped. At five o'clock, the close of the poll, the count at Edmonton stood- Oliver 95, Lamoureux 15, Mulkins 3.

"As it was a foregone conclusion that Edmonton would give a large majority for Oliver and Fort Saskatchewan a large one for Lamoureux,the greatest interest centered in the contest at St. Albert,as it having a large number of voters was able to turn the

scale either way. At noon there the count was forty-seven for Oliver and thirty-seven for Lamoureux: the poll was closed for an hour. Most of the votes of the division had been polled in the forenoon and enough had been done to show how the contest would end so that the interest and excitement were considerably less in the afternoon. At the close of the poll the count stood--Oliver 56, Lamoureux 50, Mulkins 0.

"The contest at Fort Saskatchewan was as one-sided and more quiet than that at Edmonton. At noon the count was twenty for Lamoureux, four for Oliver and one for Mulkins and at five o'clock twenty-nine for Lamoureux, four for Oliver and one for Mulkins.

"The final count was made in the public school house at noon on Wednesday by Captain Gagnon,returning officer, and A.Taylor, election clerk, assisted by Messrs. R. Hardisty and E. Brousseau, who testified as to the correctness of the count: Oliver 155, Lamoureux 94, and Mulkins 4, giving Mr. Oliver a majority of 61." Mr. Frank Oliver was then declared elected by the returning officer and the first political election ever held in Edmonton was over.

In due course, Edmonton's representative joined the other five elected members at the fifth session of the North-West Council, which opened at Regina in August, 1883, and from time to time through the issues of the Bulletin the proceedings of the Council were brought to the attention of the electorate of the Edmonton district.

CHAPTER XII

The North-West Rebellion of 1885

It had been a matter of common knowledge for several years to those living in the North-West that there was a considerable amount of dissatisfaction among the Indians and half-breeds regarding the treatment they had received from the Government, the former in connection with their treaty rights, and the latter with the tenure of their land.

While there was perhaps no direct and intentional violation of treaty obligations by the government, there was a general laxness and blundering in the conduct of Indian affairs on the part of officials entrusted with this task, a lack of understanding of Indian temperament and needs. Verbal promises without number had been given to tide over temporary difficulties, which often were not kept, and many provisions of the treaties were wholly or partially ignored. Individually, the grievances did not appear so large and were spread over a period of time, yet they caused a general feeling of distrust and resentment among the Indians.

Canadian officials at Ottawa had been urged repeatedly by persons conversant with affairs in the West, as early as 1884, to look into the claims of the Saskatchewan Métis. The uncertainty in which they had been left in respect to their right to the land they had taken up coupled with recurrent friction with minor government officials had led the half-breeds of what is now Saskatchewan to demand treatment with reference to land-scrip similar to that granted those of their class in Manitoba. The attitude of the Government in completely ignoring their communications and in neglecting to take any action with regard to their grievances had sown a spirit of recklessness and animosity among the Métis towards those in authority. This resulted finally in the convening of the malcontents under the leadership of Gabriel Dumont for the French Métis and James Isbister on behalf of the Scotch Métis and the successful importuning of Riel, then in Montana, to return to the North-West as their leader. Acceding to their pleas, Riel came back, held meetings of the discontented half-breeds and began to stir up the Indians. It was at Batoche on the South Saskatchewan that the outbreak began and a rebel government was set up.

The first rumour that there was any trouble afoot came to Edmonton through a telegraphic despatch dated March 14th, 1885, which read- "The attitude of the half-breeds at Batoche's is causing some uneasiness. Riel is urging them to take arbitrary measures to secure certain rights for which they contend. He addressed a large gathering on Sunday last (March 8th) outside the church ..... the half-breeds are very reticent and nothing can be learned from them of their intentions or designs beyond the assertion that they have wrongs and are bound to have them redressed and that the present is a good time for their purpose. So many conflicting reports are current that nothing definite can be learned of their movements." (1)

Authentic news that a half-breed uprising had actually broken out at Batoche came to Edmonton in the following telegraphic despatch from Battleford on March 20th,1885:

"A police courier left Carleton at eight o'clock last evening and arrived here this morning bringing despatches saying that the rebels had seized Indian Department stores at Batoche's

(1) Edmonton Bulletin,March 4th,1885.

and made Indian agent,Lash, a prisoner. Telegraph wires were cut on Wednesday night between Clark's Crossing and Duck Lake and between Clark's Crossing and Humboldt. Connection with Carleton district is cut off on all sides. It was threatened that Carleton would be attacked last night or this morning. Couriers from Carleton left here this morning for Swift Current to wire the news to the government. Colonel Irvine is on his way north with one hundred men and sixty horses and should reach Carleton tomorrow. Riel threatens to cut this party off and take the others in detail. The number of half breeds under arms is estimated at from four hundred to one thousand men. Riel was at Saskatoon yesterday and threatened to take that place in retaliation for the settlers there having offered aid to Battleford last summer. The settlers have asked for police protection. Mails are travelling under escort. Riel claims to be an American citizen and therefore not amenable to our laws. He demanded one seventh of the land in the North-West for the half-breeds and for other purposes. The government offered the same compensation as was given the half-breeds of Manitoba but this offer was refused. It is considered that the steps taken to suppress the trouble will prove effective and that Riel will soon be arrested. Reported that the Sioux have been engaged to keep the telegraph wire cut. A repairer left Clark's Crossing yesterday and has not been heard from since. Volunteers

have been enrolled here this afternoon for service, if necessary. The Indians at Carleton are inclined to remain neutral. Everything tranquil here."(1)

The news of this move on the part of the half-breeds naturally caused great excitement in the Edmonton settlement and further news was awaited as to just how far such a spirit of revolt might spread. As far as the position of Edmonton was concerned the "half-breeds in the community were natives of the region and French speaking. They neither knew nor cared about conditions on the Red River. There had never been any break in the friendly relations of either half-breeds or Indians with the few white stragglers that had come in from both east and west in the '60's and '70's nor with the large number who had come from the East in the rush of 1881 to get ahead of the railway, then projected to go through Jasper Pass." (2)

"The Indian population around Edmonton were Crees, peaceably inclined people who had lived in perfect amity with the whites for a hundred years before treaty was made. From that time till the present there had not been the slightest quarrel or ill-feeling at least in this part of the district between whites and Indians."(3)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin,March 21st,1885.

(2) Oliver,Hon. Frank, article in Queen's Quarterly, Winter Number, Kingston, Ont, 1929, p 20ff.

(3) Edmonton Bulletin, April 4th,1885.

In spite of all this there were forebodings that these heretofore peaceable half-breeds and Indians might become inflamed by secret emissaries of Riel. It had been realized that Edmonton was the most remote settlement in the country and totally unprotected, and that the population of the country around was more largely Indian and half-breed than white. Its situation was aptly described in the Bulletin issue of April 4th, 1885 - "The Edmonton settlement is the centre of an Indian Agency district which contains a fighting population of at least five hundred men and these might receive outside assistance. The fort is a fort no longer except in name but contains an immense value in goods. The Indian Agency is in the town perfectly open to be plundered; there are five general stores with not less than $50,000 worth of stock on hand and there is a large population of men, women and children in town and surrounding country, while the police force and fort is eighteen miles distant and on the opposite side of the river with only enough men in it to hold it successfully against attack. These facts are all patent to the Indians as well as to the white men and in case of danger will be taken advantage of no doubt."(1)

Alarmed at the possibility of an uprising, a volunteer defence corps was organized under the command of Captain W. Stiff,

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 4th, 1885.

with an enrolment of sixty-eight, and an appeal for protection sent to the Mounted Police post at Fort Saskatchewan. Captain A. H. Griesbach,in command there, was taking precautionary measures in case the disturbing rumours should materialize into an uprising. He had enlisted the services of all available men in building bastions, strengthening the stockade and putting the fort in a proper state of defence, so that it would be a safe place of refuge for the settlers in the neighborbood. He,however, in response to the request, came up to Edmonton with several of his men to see about taking measures for defence but finding that quietness reigned returned to his post. (1) Telegraphic despatches coming in from Battleford shortly after reported no indication of the Indians in its immediate vicinity joining the rebels but presented disturbing news, which had just arrived there by courier, of the battle at Duck Lake and of the general alarm felt through the Prince Albert and Carleton country.

From the pen of the Honourable Frank Oliver,who for nine years prior to the uprising had been a resident of Edmonton,one gets a description of how the news of the rebellion affected the settlement:

"The news of the Duck Lake fight reached Edmonton on Friday, March 27th. The wire from Battleford was our means of quick communication with the outside posts. On Sunday evening on returning from church I decided to walk out to Norris and Carey's store (2) to find out what slant they had on the situation. So far there had been no local developments, although there were plenty of rumours and predictions. A trail crossed

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, March 28th,1885.

(2) This store was situated somewhere south of the present Misericordia Hospital.

from the town to the Fort, a distance of possibly a mile (the town, such as it was, lay eastward from what is now 101st street,which was the easterly boundary of the reserve.) The group of Indian tents stood in the usual place. I passed close to them in going to the store. The drum was sounding as usual; no evidence of disturbance of any kind present or prospective." (1)

The continuous beating of the drum had a significance as far as the Indians who frequented the Fort were concerned. Fort Edmonton had been a trading post for the Indians for many years: there had always been a constant coming and going of Indians to the post and groups of tepees were seldom absent from the rising ground a little to the west of the Fort. When the Indians came to trade, they generally stayed a day or two for pleasure and to entertain their friends. The chief entertainment was the tea-dance which meant drinking tea and dancing to the sound of the drum. Gambling was likewise a favourite pastime also to drum accompaniment.

"Between coming and going," wrote Mr. Oliver,"there was always a group of Indian tents near the Fort and without exception night after night,winter or summer, and year after year, the drum sounded and the dancing and gambling was kept up until early morning. It was a permanent and prominent feature of the life of Edmonton.

"In the store were Jack Norris, Ed. Carey,Tom Hourston, Bill Cust and Jim Gibbons. All these men were married to native

(1) Oliver, Hon. Frank, Queen's Quarterly, Winter Number, Kingston,Ont,1929, p 20ff.

women of good families. Their business activities and domestic relationships kept them in close touch with all sections of the community and more particularly with the half-breeds and Indians. All these men were of wide experience and high intelligence. We discussed the situation from all angles and they had no illusions as to what would happen to their property, if not to themselves, in case of trouble. They deeply regretted the misfortune of Duck Lake but were unanimous in the belief that it would have no result in Edmonton, so far as the half-breeds were concerned. They were equally hopeful regarding the Indians. The influence of these and other white men who had married and settled in the country was an important factor in preventing the spread among local half-breeds of the ideas that had found favour at Batouche. Summing up the position, Carey said :'When the Indians go to war the first thing they do is to put their families in safety at a distance from the scene of action. If the Indians meant mischief now, the tents would not be in town. So long as you hear the sound of the drum there can be no danger.' That seemed to clinch the matter satisfactorily. I returned home, passing the Indian tents again on the way. I slept without thought of danger for the drum was the last sound I heard before going to sleep. In the morning there was not a tent in sight. The removal of the tents was accepted by all parties as notice that a state of war existed.... .....that it was not immediately followed by active hostilities

was due to divided counsels among the Indians. One party wanted war, another peace. Indian discussions take a great deal of time. While the Indians talked the whites prepared for defence. Even though they might not ultimately be effective these preparations strengthened the arguments of the Indian peace party and temporarily delayed action by the local hostiles."(1)

On Tuesday, April 7th, two men from the government farm at Saddle Lake, Messrs. Carson and Ingraham, came into Edmonton with the story that "on the afternoon of April 2nd an Indian had told them that a messenger had arrived from Riel's camp at the South Branch with a letter signed by Riel to the Indians in that district urging them to rebel. The letter had passed through Battleford and been added to there, then through Pitt and again been added to and now was being passed on to Lac La Biche and finally to Edmonton. The letter told of the battle at Duck Lake and the eleven white men killed, of Fort Pitt and Frog Lake being taken by Big Bear and Little Pine and of sub-agent Quinn and Delaney, the farm instructor, being killed, and it called on the Indians to assemble in a grand council at Fort Pitt at once. Shortly afterwards, another Indian came in with a similar report.

"On Friday morning a band of Indians had come to the instructor, had ordered him to shoot one of the oxen and had demanded that the storehouse

(1) Oliver, Hon. Frank, Queen's Quarterly, Winter Number, Kingston, Ont., 1929, p 20ff.

be opened to them. This Mr. Carson refused to do,whereupon one of them struck him on the head with a club and two others seized him. They then with an axe cut open the storehouse door and threw out what provisions they wished, principally biscuits, and stayed around all day helping themselves to whatever they wanted. In the evening, Mr. Carson asked them to go away as he required a little sleep and they did so. While they were gone, Reverend Mr. Inkster, who had read Riel's letter, came and informed them that the Indians intended to burn the house down that night. They had intended to sleep in the haystack but on this information they started for Victoria afoot in the clothes they were wearing and carrying their blankets. They had not been gone many minutes when they heard the Indians attack the house. They made the forty miles to Victoria without mishap and J. Norn brought them on to Edmonton. They arrived at their homes in the Sturgeon settlement on Monday and came into town on Tuesday."(1)

This graphic story naturally caused considerable excitement in Edmonton. It was felt on all sides that the rising of the Indians around the settlement,stimulated by the action of the Fort Pitt Indians would be only a matter of days. A meeting was held in Kelly's saloon on the afternoon of April 7th at which Mr. Carson related his adventures at Saddle Lake and the impression became general that danger was imminent. A messenger was at once sent

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 11th,1885.

to Fort Saskatchewan to convey the disturbing news to Captain Griesbach and to make the request that he come up at once to Edmonton. Warning of what had occurred was also given to the settlers out at Little Mountain. It was proposed at the meeting to despatch a courier to Calgary with the news but as there were no funds available the only recourse was to await the arrival of Captain Griesbach who would be armed with the necessary authority.

While the meeting in Kelly's saloon was in progress the mail arrived from Calgary in charge of Mr. McKinnon.With it came the following particulars of the South Branch rising up to April 2nd:-

"After the battle of Duck Lake and the retirement of the police under Crozier to Carleton they were joined by Colonel Irvine with one hundred men. Finding Carleton untenable they abandoned and set fire to it,retreating to Prince Albert. Since that time no news of any collision has arrived and the government is known to be in treaty by telegraph with the half-breeds to secure a settlement of the difficulty. The commissioners appointed were to leave Ottawa on April 1st.

"An Indian rising took place on Sunday,March 29th, the Crees gathering on Poundmaker's reserve and marching on Battleford . That night several houses were broken into and robbed. On the 20th some of them came into town and threatened to burn it down and seize the police barracks and stores. The women and children were hurried

into the barracks, all the men to the number of two hundred enrolled, and arms issued to them. Settlers' places were raided and the industrial school seized by the Indians. A pow-wow was held at the agency but resulted in nothing, the Indians acting as if they owned the town. Up to this time the Crees and Stonies had kept aloof from the movement. On the 31st reports were received that the industrial school had been burned, the Hudson's Bay store gutted and other stores raided, Indian agent Rae fired upon and the farm instructor and assistant killed. On April 2nd it was reported that the whole of the Indians in the neighborhood had joined in the outbreak..... Eagle Hills Crees and Stonies, who would not join the outbreak at first, killed farm instructor James Payne, George E. Appelgarthe and two settlers and drove all the horses and cattle of settlers before them as they advanced. Some alarm was felt at Calgary and Medicine Hat but up to last accounts no definite knowledge of danger existed."(1)

Mr. McKinnon, who had brought the mail, gave the further information to those assembled that four companies were being raised in Alberta under Colonel Strange, a car-load of arms and ammunition for which was daily expected at Calgary. He reported a quiet journey up and had found the Indians friendly enough, but the Bear's Hill Indians were talking fight. (2)

The arrival of the commanding officer of the Mounted Police was anxiously awaited and as he had not come by seven o'clock

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 11th, 1885.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, April 11th, 1885.

that evening another meeting was held in the Masonic Hall with Captain Stiff as chairman. As it was felt that something should be done quickly ,a committee of defence was appointed to take the necessary measures to protect life and property in the Edmonton district, the personnel of which was as follows: D.Ross, chairman, M. McCauley, Dr. H. C. Wilson,W.S.Robertson, James McDonald, F. Oliver and E. Carey. Those in attendance at the meeting pledged themselves to support the committee in whatever action it might take and the newly enrolled volunteer company was placed at its disposal. The committee of defence was then empowered to send another messenger to Captain Griesbach asking him to take the necessary steps for defending the place or give official sanction to the committee in so doing.(1)

At this point of the proceedings Captain Griesbach and Messrs. Anderson, McDougall and Simpson,J.P's,arrived from Fort Saskatchewan and were informed of what had taken place. The Police Inspector was made a member of the committee of defence and the meeting dispersed,leaving all matters in the hands of that body. The committee then held a consultation and on Captain Griesbach's authority a courier was despatched to Calgary asking for troops and arms to be sent as soon as possible. The best point for a stronghold of defence was then discussed and Captain Griesbach stated that in his opinion-"There was one dependable point and that was the Hudson's Bay fort in which they and their families could take refuge; that there were in the Hudson's Bay fort thirty-five stand of Enfield rifles with five hundred rounds of ball cartridges and also caps all of

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 11th,1885.

which the officer in charge would lend; that Edmonton had a company of volunteers with elected officers, already enrolled, but not accepted by the Militia Department, which he would take upon himself the responsibility of arming and quartering in the fort. This being done they would then have a place where they could with their wives and families come for safety."(1)

Another meeting of the defence committee was held on the morning of Wednesday, April 8th, at which Captain Griesbach announced that the fort had been placed at his disposal by the Hudson's Bay officials; that he would assume full charge of defence measures for Edmonton and that no expense would be spared to make the fort as capable as possible of resisting an attack.(2) The proposals then put forward by this officer at first met with some opposition but eventually were acquiesced in and "the next day the company was armed, quartered, rationed and placed on duty under the command of an ex-major of the militia as captain."(3) A notice was also posted calling for volunteers who, as soon as sworn in, would be placed under pay and

(1) Report of Captain A.H.Griesbach, Inspector of Mounted Police at Fort Saskatchewan, August 10th, 1885, being Appendix G of the Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police Force, 1885, p 74.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, April 11th, 1885.

(3) Report of Inspector A.H.Griesbach, p 74.

rations allowed them. Captain Stiff, the officer referred to,was given full charge of the fort and sole control of the volunteer force, during Captain Griesbach's absence. He also received instructions how to proceed in repairing the fort so that it would be a safe stronghold in case of an uprising: "I directed the Captain to have the stockade repaired and rebuilt along the front of the fort, the bastions looked to and the fort generally placed in as good a state of defence as possible. I also directed him to collect all the ammunition of all descriptions then in the stores and place the same under guard in the magazine,giving receipts for it."(1) The Mounted Police officer then proceeded to take an inventory of the resources of the fort with regard to arms. All those available were examined and tested: "There were in the fort two brass 4-pr guns. I had these remounted on strong trucks and cartridges made; also case shot which I improvised by having tin cases made to fit the bore and then filled them with about ninety trade balls which on trying I found to answer well."(2) The settlers and citizens of Edmonton were then notified that they might take shelter in the fort,when danger approached.

"A large number of volunteers were enrolled and took the oath of allegiance. A detachment was at once sent down to clear away the ice on the river bank to allow the ferry-scow to be put in

(1) Report of Captain A.H.Griesbach,Inspector of Mounted Police at Fort Saskatchewan,being Appendix G of the Report of the Commissioner North-West Mounted Police Force, 1885, p 74.

(2) Ibid. p 74.

the water for the purpose of bringing across a quantity of powder and ball which had just arrived per Ad. McPherson's carts for Norris and Carey. This was brought across and placed under guard in the fort."(1)

Having done what he felt was necessary for the defence of Edmonton, Captain Griesbach returned to Fort Saskatchewan to look after matters there, leaving Captain Stiff in charge. This officer then proceeded to carry out his instructions with regard to repairing the fort. Volunteers under his command vigorously commenced the erection of a stockade on the southwest of the fort which at the time was unprotected ,having been torn down the previous summer because of its dilapidated state. Work progressed with a will : this side was soon reconstructed, a heavy gate erected and the foundation of a bastion laid where the wall touched the river bank, thereby greatly increasing the safety of the fort. (2) Men were sworn in as special constables and mounted for patrol and courier work. Pickets were posted at night all around the town and also on the south side of the river in the vicinity of the fort. On Thursday, April 9th, several south-side families, women and children, were brought into the fort which was being rapidly got ready for their occupation. Other families in the same

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 11th, 1885.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, April 18th, 1885.

(3) Edmonton Bulletin, April 11th, 1885.

vicinity were placed in the houses of James McKernan and John Walters on the south side and armed as well as circumstances would permit.(1)

Out at St. Albert many families gathered at the Mission for protection and some were making preparations to seek shelter at Fort Edmonton. Scouts were posted around with instructions to give the alarm "when Indians were known to be near so that the committee consisting of His Lordship, Bishop Grandin, and Reverend Fathers Lestanc and Remas, should go to meet them and hold parley with them. If they meant peace, they were not to be molested and, if war, they were to be opposed."(2)

While these preparations were going on within the settlement, intercourse was wholly cut off with the outside world. The telegraph line had been cut off since March 28th,as the result of the wire becoming grounded about forty-five miles this side of Battleford. There was,therefore, no quick means of communication, no means of knowing what was going on outside,and how serious the uprising was becoming, except through those who had felt it advisable for their own safety to seek shelter at Edmonton or through the mail which naturally had news that was somewhat old. There were rumours in plenty. While the white population remained in ignorance, the Indians of the settlement were kept fully informed by means of their own,by what was known as the "moccasin telegraph".

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 11th,1885.

(2) Ibid.

On Friday, April 10th, five men, Messrs. Thomas Edmundson, James Aylwin, F. Lucas, W. Mavor and J. Ashen arrived at Edmonton from Bear's Hill, having left there the day before. They reported that they had been told by Chief Erminskin that for their own safety's sake they should leave at once for Edmonton and that all white men in the vicinity should make themselves scarce. Chief Bobtail and his son, Coyote, were the chief mischief-makers. Several of the settlers were taking their families to Calgary. The Bear's Hill Indians had plenty of Winchester rifles and ammunition. There had been a great deal of night movement among them, lately, riders passing to and fro at all hours of the night.(1)

Such stories had anything but a quieting effect on the population of the settlement. Many in Edmonton felt that as no measures had been taken by the police and magistrates for the protection of persons or property outside the Hudson's Bay fort something should be done. A meeting of citizens was therefore held in J.A.McDougall's store on Friday, April 10th, Dr. H.C.Wilson in the chair, to consider what steps to take. It was resolved to place the general defence in the hands of a committee consisting of Messrs. J.Brown, E. Carey and D.R.Fraser and that everyone should be asked to help in any undertaking to protect life and property. As a result of this meeting, early on Saturday morning, a force of men turned out and cut down a large amount of thick brush in the rear of the town as a safeguard against lurking Indians, and with the intention of

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 11th, 1885.

building a fort. The work proceeded vigorously all day until about four o'clock in the afternoon when a despatch from Captain Griesbach arrived. This was brought up post haste and read to the crowd by Captain Stiff. The news was to the effect that a scout, A.McNichol, had just arrived from Beaver Lake and reported-"that several Indian bands from Whitefish Lake, Lac la Biche and Saddle Lake had passed the lake on their way to join the Bear's Hill Indians, sixty miles south of Edmonton. They had called at the house of R. Steele and made Mrs. Steele cook for them and made Mr. Steele kill one of his pigs, dress the meat and pack it in bags to their camp. They also took two of his cattle as provisions for their journey. They said they were going to attend a council which was to be held on Sunday at Bear's Hill to decide on a day of rising . They said they intended chiefly to make war on the government and the white men but any half-breeds who took up arms would suffer as well as the whites. They ordered the half-breeds to assemble at Battle river and swear not to fight against them."(1) When the despatch was read to the crowd there was consternation, "the impression being that sufficient time was not remaining to complete the proposed fort and as time was the essence of the contract a change of plan was necessary. Some members of the committee desired to carry out the programme, others thought it was better to concentrate all the force at the Hudson's Bay fort. The result was nothing was done."(2)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 11th, 1885.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, April 18th, 1885.

The efforts of the citizens to construct a fortification thus came to a stop. The merchants and leading men of Edmonton then signed a petition asking Captain Griesbach to leave Fort Saskatchewan and permanently take charge of the defence of Edmonton. This was taken to the police post on the evening of Saturday,April 11th, by Messrs. Brown ,Fraser and J. Looby . The men returned to the settlement on Sunday morning with Captain Griesbach's answer which was to the effect that he would remain where he was. (1) The reasons given for his refusal were as outlined briefly in his annual report to his superior officer, the Commissioner of Mounted Police, viz.,- "I received a requisition from the citizens of Edmonton and also a deputation asking me to abandon Fort Saskatchewan and to come with all my force to Edmonton to protect them. This,of course, I declined to do giving them the following reasons: 1. That I had now in my fort seventy-nine women and children whom I would not abandon; 2. That they had actually a larger force and more arms than I had, as well as a stronger fort; 3. That I, as a soldier, would never abandon any fort,unless I received instructions from my superior officer to do so, or I was driven or burnt out. This answer ended the matter as far as I was concerned, although I received a large amount of abuse for not complying with their wishes."(2)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 18th,1885.

(2) Report of Captain A.H.Griesbach,Inspector of Mounted Police at Fort Saskatchewan,being Appendix G of the Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1885, p 75.

The Police Inspector's answer was a disappointment but was accepted as final.

A further alarming report reached St. Albert and was from there sent to Edmonton that a band of fifteen hundred Indians had attacked Fort Saskatchewan. In consequence of this rumour there was a stampede of refugee families to Edmonton and to the Mission at St. Albert all day Sunday. In abandoning their homes some of the settlers cached what possessions they could not carry and turned their stock loose to forage for themselves or else drove them to the shelter they were seeking. Approximately, seventy-five women and children had moved into the fort during Sunday for shelter and protection. By evening of that day the greater part of the south side settlers had come over to the north side of the river. The Indian office and stores were also moved into the fort for safety.(1)

The work of repairing the Hudson's Bay fort was feverishly pushed all day Sunday. The bastion being rebuilt at the south-west corner of the stockade was completed and the wall continued from there easterly to connect with the remnant of the old wall still standing by the fort blacksmith's shop. The south-east wall was also still further barricaded, the stockade generally strengthened and the old bastions put in a proper state of defence. The ground around the stables south-east of the fort was cleared of fences and other

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 18th,1885.

encumbrances and preparations were made to hold these buildings by the mounted men. Late Sunday afternoon word came from Fort Saskatchewan that the news regarding the attack was false. This, combined with reassuring reports brought in by scouts from Victoria, considerably lessened the nervous tension of the community. However, the work of fortification was continued and also the making of ammunition of various kinds . On Monday, a poster was issued, signed by Captain Stiff, asking for one hundred armed men for twenty days at $4.00 a day. A small entrenchment was thrown up on the brow of the hill near Morris and Carey's store and a force of sixty-five men placed in the Chief Factor's house, which was barricaded and generally strengthened. A mounted patrol, ten in number, was also assigned to guard this building. At the fort, precaution was taken to resist any attempt to scale the walls by the issuing of brush-hooks to several men stationed there. (1)

Edmonton was still completely shut off from outside news. No word had been received from Battleford or Saddle Lake in fifteen days, no news had arrived yet from Calgary, although a messenger had been sent there. It was felt that, in addition to making all possible preparations for defence, the isolated position of Edmonton made it imperative that a number of scouts and couriers should be enrolled to keep watch for possible sources of danger and warn those in authority of its probable extent and the direction from which it might arise. Indian reserves were on all sides of the

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 18th, 1885.

little community, any one of which might be the assembling ground for a large band of hostile Indians.

Efforts were made to find out what was the attitude of the Indians in the district. The chief of the Stoney Plain band of Indians expressed himself as having no desire to make war or to get into trouble with the government. Woodpecker, the chief at Two Hills,was reported to be anxious for peace but some of his brothers wanted to fight and to go where the fighting was. Mr. McDougall of the Hudson's Bay Company went out to St. Albert on Tuesday,April 14th, to engage a strong party of half-breeds used to the ways of Indians to go to Bear's Hill to spy out the movements of the bands there, but he was unable to raise a sufficient force and so had to give up the plan.

Each day brought a fresh batch of news and rumours more or less disquieting,but showing that the disaffection among the Indians was coming closer. Reverend Père Blanchette coming from Lac Ste. Anne to St. Albert on Tuesday,April 14th, told that the Indians there, headed by Chief Alexis, had demanded and had been given goods by the clerk of the Hudson's Bay store and on being refused anything further chased him with a club and seized the rest of the stock, that

a letter from Riel had arrived there a short time before telling them they had been imposed on for a long time but now they should assert themselves and strike against the government and the Hudson's Bay Company. (1) There was also the rumour that the Blackfoot had risen in the south and torn up the railway track.

Meanwhile, troops were being rushed to the scene of the rebellion from Winnipeg and points in the East as fast as possible. The task of organizing for the defence of the Alberta district was entrusted by General Middleton to Major General T.B.Strange, then ranching in the vicinity of Blackfoot Crossing, but who formerly had seen distinguished service in the Imperial and Canadian armies. Under his command a troop of cavalry, known as the Alberta Mounted Rifles, was assembled by Major Hutton, a former officer of the Canadian Militia, and a corps of scouts was organized by Inspector Sam Steele of the North-West Mounted Police. The latter had been on guard duty in British Columbia, while the Canadian Pacific Railway was being constructed there, but was summoned to Calgary, when the seriousness of the uprising manifested itself. Inspector Steele incorporated his diminished force of police into his newly organized band of volunteer scouts, the group being known as Steele's Scouts.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 18th, 1885.

On April 11th, General Strange received instructions from General Middleton to march at once to the aid of Edmonton with whatever forces he could command. The timely arrival at Calgary of the first troops from the East, the 65th Carabiniers Mount Royal from Montreal, followed by the coming on the 17th of the 92nd Winnipeg Light Infantry under Lieutenant-Colonel W. Osborne Smith facilitated matters for the officer in command of the Alberta district. With these assembled troops General Strange prepared to move on Edmonton and from that point to proceed to the relief of Fort Pitt and attempt the capture of Big Bear. The Alberta Field Force, as the little army was called, was to go forward in three divisions. The first, under General Strange himself, started north on April 20th. It comprised companies 2,5,6 and 7 of the 65th Battalion and Steele's Scouts, to the number of sixty, under the leadership of Major Steele himself.

While this was happening in the southern settlement, Edmonton anxiously awaited the result of the appeal for help,arms and ammunition, sent by messenger, Mr. James Mowat, on April 11th. Word came through by mail from Calgary,however, dated April 19th, of the arrival there of troops from the East and despatches brought by courier for Captains Stiff and Griesbach on Wednesday,the 22nd, confirmed the news of the arrival of the 65th and the Winnipeg troops and the assembling of the force to march north to Edmonton,the date

of departure being set for Monday, April 20th.(1) Father Lacombe arriving from the south, where he had been untiring in his efforts to induce the Indians to keep the peace, a few days later, brought the further reassuring news that the Bear's Hill Indians were very much frightened at the prospect of troops coming. He thought Edmonton need have no further fear. The population of the settlement took heart. There was a general hunting up of caches and a general returning of families with their household goods to their accustomed places of abode; the storekeepers on their part furbished up their neglected places of business ready for the resumption of the normal trend of everyday life. Security was made certain with the arrival of the advance section of the relief force under General Strange on May 1st, the two hundred miles over exceedingly bad roads having been covered in ten days. The force was transported across the Saskatchewan river by Walter's ferry and warmly welcomed by the residents of Edmonton. The second section of the relief column under Major Perry, comprising some twenty police with a field gun and four companies of the 65th Mount Royal Rifles from Montreal, reached Edmonton on May 5th and the third and last group, the Light Infantry from Winnipeg, under Lieutenant-Colonel W. Osborne Smith, arrived on the 10th.(2)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 25th, 1885.

(2) Jamieson, F.C., Alberta Field Force of '85, Canadian North-West Historical Society Publications, Battleford, Sask, 1931, v I, No.VII, p 19.

Edmonton was for a time the scene of much bustle and activity since it was a point en route of the relief force proceeding via the Saskatchewan River to Fort Pitt for the purpose of rounding up Big Bear's band and joining the other military forces from the East in their effort to put an end to the rebellion. Food for the troops and fodder for their mounts was hurriedly assembled. Flat boats or scows were already under construction for the transport of troops and supplies to Fort Pitt as the Reverend John McDougall,who had enlisted as a volunteer in the Field Force, had been sent on ahead of the relief column to Edmonton to get transportation facilities for the troops under way. As the result of his energetic efforts,this detail of the service was well in hand, when the troops arrived. A large scow had been obtained from the Hudson's Bay Company and the construction of four smaller ones neared completion. "A specially built scow had a platform for the field gun, the army's only piece of artillery, and barrels and sacks of pork,beef,flour and other supplies were piled around the sides of the scow as 'armour'. On account of the lack of space the gun was lashed, the whole scow taking the recoil and the gun was transversed by pointing the whole scow.....This gunboat was named the 'Big Bear' by the lads of the 65th and was no doubt the first warship in Alberta waters."(1)

(1) Jamieson,F.C., The Alberta Field Force of '85, Canadian North-West Historical Society Publications, Battleford,Sask., 1931, v I, No. VII, p 21.

Volunteers from Edmonton,Fort Saskatchewan and district were enrolled for military service and transport duty, many settlers enlisting themselves,their wagons and teams in the 'wagon transport' for the conveying of supplies and ammunition to the scene of hostilities.

When arrangements were completed, the Field Force took its departure, one company of the 65th Mounted Rifles being left at Edmonton for garrison duty much to the perturbation of the settlement which felt that the protection was inadequate. The Edmonton Home Guard had been disbanded by General Strange on his arrival and many of its members had enlisted in the Alberta Field Force. Major Steele with his Scouts and companies 5 and 6 of the 65th were the first to leave on May 5th; two more companies of this battalion under Colonel Hughes proceeded eastward via the old Fort Pitt trail on May 8th.(1) The flotilla of scows set forth shortly after, transporting General Strange and staff, Major Perry and his police with the field gun and also the Winnipeg Light Infantry under Colonel Osborne Smith. Scouts in canoes preceded the 'fleet' in order to safeguard its navigating the river.(2)

"As soon as the troops arrived, the war, begun on March 29th,was over so far as the Edmonton country was concerned. The Indians vied with each other in expressions of good will towards

(1) Jamieson,F.C.,The Alberta Field Force of '85, Canadian North-West Historical Society Publications, Battleford,Sask., 1931, v 1, No. VII, p 22.

(2) Ibid.

the whites and the government. Someone else (impersonal and unidentified) had pushed them to do what ever wrong had been done. They urgently hoped there would be no hard feelings. As for the whites they had come out of the trouble so much better than they had even hoped that they too were willing to let by-gones be by-gones..... There had been no local bloodshed, all had been good friends before and all were good friends again. But the night the drum throb ceased in Edmonton marked the end of the old way and the beginning of the new. It was the end of the road for the Red man. His dominance had ceased, the land of his fathers was no longer his."(1)

(1) Oliver, Hon. Frank, Queen's Quarterly, Winter Number, Kingston,Ont. 1929, p 20ff.

CHAPTER XIII

The Land Office Affair

Railway construction north from Calgary,connecting with the Canadian Pacific Railway at that point, was undertaken by the Calgary and Edmonton Railway Company. While its charter provided for crossing the Saskatchewan and penetrating into the Peace River country, the contract stated that the road should terminate on the banks of the Saskatchewan River at or near Edmonton. In financing their project, the contractors accepted as part payment for the contruction of the road parcels of land for town sites at the various stations proposed along the route. As the railway construction progressed northwards, a railway town,known as the village of Strathcona, sprang up on the south bank of the river directly opposite Edmonton,which point was reached by the railroad on July 27th,1891, and made the terminus of the line. The contractors would not listen to the many inducements for railway construction to cross the river offered by the town of Edmonton which was anxious for rail facilities, as nine tenths of the freight coming in was for the north side. In locating their town on the south side, an arrangement was entered into by the railway company with certain property owners for a half interest in their several properties. Thus both parties would reap the benefit of the advance in value which would accrue from the improvements which the

railroad would bring. The agents of the company were then endeavouring to create a speculative town site on the south side of the river, and, naturally,under these circumstances great rivalry sprang up between the two towns.

Edmonton,the older town, had its roots in the past, first as an important Hudson's Bay fur-trading post, then as a centre around which settlement had grown during many years. It had come tacitly to be recognized as the capital of the district. There were held the sittings of the court and there were located the post-office and the office for the registry of land and of permits for the cutting of timber and hay. The pioneers were justly proud of the town they had built up through years of toil, mingled with disappointments and discouragement. The name and prestige of Edmonton meant much to them and also the fact that it was the commercial centre and gateway to a northern region of great extent and resources. Every advantage was sought by the promoters of the new town and those who were booming it frequently made threats that they would exert influence on the government to have the public offices removed to the south side as a means of stimulating its growth and importance. It was known that among the parcels of property, a portion of which had been given to the railway by private individuals, was one held by the land and timber agent, Mr. Thomas Anderson or his son. The station was located on this property and most of the improvements were made thereon, which of course greatly increased the value of the half interest held by the donor. It was also a well-known fact that he was

a very enthusiastic promoter of the new town and a zealous advocate of those interests sponsoring the railroad. Disturbed at first by such threats, the north side residents obtained assurance from the government, through Senator Girard, that such a thing would not take place. Alive to the needs of their town, however, the Edmonton Town Council in April, 1892, appointed Messrs. J. A. McDougall and N.D.Beck as delegates to go to Ottawa to impress on the government the necessity of erecting at once immigrant sheds and permanent buildings for land, timber and registry offices. The Edmonton delegates were well received at Ottawa. They interviewed various members of parliament, elicited the interest and support of several senators and approached the Premier and the Ministers of the Interior and of Public Works. To all of these the claims of Edmonton for the erection of public buildings and a bridge were strongly urged. After due consideration by the government, the delegates were informed that an order-in-council would forthwith be passed accepting the lots offered by the Hudson's Bay Company as a site for the buildings and authorizing the calling of tenders for their erection thereon. They were further told that they might expect the buildings to be completed by the coming September or October and such details even as the material for the buildings were discussed by the Edmontonians with the Minister of Public Works. The delegates, enthusiastic at the success of their mission, wired to Edmonton on April 8th, 1892, that they had the assurance of the Minister of Public Works that the government offices

would be erected on the north side of the river on the site in the town chosen years before and that the buildings would be constructed during that year. Lulled by these authoritative statements, the townspeople of Edmonton felt that they could ignore any of the threats made by the interests booming the settlement on the south side.

On Thursday, June 16th, 1892, Strathcona received a brief visit from Mr. J. M. Gordon, inspector of land agencies, who gave notice to Mr. Anderson, the local land agent, that for the convenience of new settlers he was authorized to remove his office to a box car which had been leased from the railway company, pending the completion of an office at the time under construction but the purpose of which had up till then been unknown. Some curiosity was doubtless aroused by the visit of the inspector of land agencies but its object was not publicly known. Everything ran smoothly until Saturday, June 18th. About three o'clock on the afternoon of that day, the local land agent ordered the dray company to send a team to his house to remove some furniture. On its arrival he accompanied it to the land office and began immediately to load the books and furniture upon the truck. This attracted the attention of the town graders, who happened to be at work near the land office and who saw what was going on. It was the first intimation anyone had of the proposed move. The workmen at once hastened to let it be known what was happening. In a few minutes an angry crowd of citizens had assembled, while the alarm was being sent all over town. They found on arrival the following

notice affixed to the door of the land office: "Notice- The timber and land office has been removed over to South Edmonton immediately opposite the depot built for the immigration.

Sgd. Thos. Anderson,D.L.A. & C.T.A. "

A copy of the same announcement was a few minutes later handed to the Bulletin representative for publication.

The first comers unhitched the horses and took the nuts off the wagon axles to prevent the load being moved. In a short space of time about two hundred men representing the business,professional men and householders generally had assembled around the land office determined to know why the promises made so definitely by the government were broken. Mr. Anderson,the agent, at once went to the police barracks for assistance and returned with two policemen. The officers of the law, however, found that they were powerless under the circumstances, as they could not move the wagons without horses and the latter were not to be had. The citizens were greatly wrought up over the occurrence. Because of the very sudden and seemingly secret manner in which the moving had been attempted the citizens did not believe the action taken was with the full knowledge and consent of the government but rather that it was the result of the influence of private speculative interests. They intended to find out to what extent such interests and influence were involved. Hence the town authorities despatched telegrams to Ottawa,stating the facts of the case and asking for an explanation. These were addressed to all the members of the Cabinet

and to several senators and members of parliament and replies thereto were anxiously awaited.

At eight o'clock the same evening, a mass meeting of citizens assembled in front of the land office, the police inspector coming on the scene about the same time. A few minutes after, four teams arrived from the south side ,which Mr. Anderson had sent for. The crowd immediately unhitched the horses from the wagons and warned the drivers not to interfere. The horses and wagons were then driven across the river by some of the citizens and tied up on the other side. While this was taking place, a disturbance arose but had no serious consequences. Mayor McCauley then addressed those assembled and proposed four resolutions which elicited cheers from the crowd for the resolutions and maledictions for the land agent. The resolutions were then telegraphed to Ottawa by the Mayor in the following form:

(1) "That in the opinion of this meeting the removal of the governmental lands and timber office is contrary to the wishes and detrimental to the best interests of nine tenths of the population of this district;

(2) "That the government be requested to cancel the instructions of J. M. Gordon,acting commissioner, to the local agent here, directing the immediate removal of the land and timber office to the south side of the river and that the local agent be instructed to return office records and furniture (now in course of removal) to the Edmonton office as reasons given for removal are false;

(3) "That in the opinion of this meeting Mr. Thomas Anderson,the

local agent here ,for personal and pecuniary interests has improperly interested himself in securing the removal of the land and timber office from this place to the south side of the river and that while the citizens of Edmonton have foreborn the making of any charges along this line in the past they deem it to be in the best interests of the government that he be removed at once.

(4) "That pending the receipt of a reply from the Department of the Interior in reference to said removal the citizens of Edmonton and vicinity be a committee with power to add to their numbers to prohibit removal and that a copy of the resolutions be wired the Premier."(1)

Before the gathering dispersed, a citizens's guard was formed to see that the loaded wagons were not moved,until a reply wire should be had from Ottawa. Inspector Piercy,however, offered to put on a police guard for the same purpose. This suggestion met with favour,was agreed to and the meeting dispersed. The crowd,however, was too excited to go home. Groups roamed around the streets until a late hour, discussing the affair in all its aspects. A proposition to burn the land agent in effigy was received with great enthusiasm and,although the police made an attempt to interfere, it was carried out with great zeal at the flag-pole between McDougall's store and the Imperial Bank.

Nothing untoward took place on Sunday,both the police and citizens' guard maintaining vigilance over the wagons. Monday morning saw a fresh wave of excitement caused by the arrival of Superintendent Griesbach from Fort Saskatchewan. Although he came in alone, having

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, June 20th,1892.

left the twenty policemen, who accompanied him, at Rat Creek outside the town limits, it was soon noised abroad that they were there, and the supposition then became general that the land office was to be forcibly removed. To meet this contingency, Mayor McCauley together with Councillor Cameron and J. A. McDougall, J.P. issued an order calling out the old Home Guard, that had been organized by General Strange during the rebellion days of '85, to keep the peace in the event of trouble arising. Nearly every able-bodied man in town, most of them armed, responded and presented themselves at the town clerk's office ready for action.

Late Monday afternoon, the following telegram was received by Mayor McCauley from the Hon. E. Dewdney, Minister of the Interior, in response to the one he had sent that official, when the trouble first arose: "To M. McCauley, Mayor- In consequence of complaints from immigrants arriving on the south side of the river regarding the long distance from the railway station and the cost and inconvenience of ferriage necessary to reach the land office to make homestead entries, the agent was ordered to temporarily remove so much of the books and records as were required to give facilities at the station. Mounted police instructed to effect the removal and it is expected that the mayor and council will assist in maintaining order. Agent Anderson had nothing to do with the removal which was decided upon solely for the public convenience and the public interests." (1)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, June 30th, 1892.

Besides this message two other telegrams were received by the Mayor from N.F.Davin,M.P. and D.A.MacPherson of the Department of the Interior , both to the effect that the removal of the land office was only temporary. While the content of these messages was reassuring they were not considered as definite enough to settle the matter. The Edmonton people still felt that the removal of the land office was deliberately intended to be permanent and to boom private property. There was nothing in the manner in which it had been performed to show that it had been done by a fully conversant government,after due consideration, and for the furtherance of the public interests. In case the instructions to the mounted police,mentioned in the Dewdney telegram,had been received by them and they were preparing to take action , the bells were rung and a crowd assembled at the land office ready to prevent the removal,if attempted. Mayor McCauley and Superintendent Griesbach had a conference, the latter giving the assurance that the police would take no action until more definite instructions had been received as to the portion of the records that were to be removed. When McCauley transmitted this promise to the crowd around the land office, it quietly dispersed.

That same evening,(Tuesday,June 20th) the Mayor sent the following two self-explanatory telegrams to the Minister of the Interior: "To E. Dewdney- Agent attempting removal of all land and timber records and office furniture to south side. If temporary office is

opened there, agent will make same headquarters and nine-tenths of the population will have to cross the river to transact business with department. If temporary office is kept open,have agent appoint sub-agent and have main office here. Instructions as received by Anderson were to move office. Town and whole northern country awaiting reply. Records and furniture still on wagons." (1) "To E. Dewdney- Immigrant shed north side full. Sixteen immigrants want to make entry. About three hundred farmers require hay permits. No office here to go to. Will government pay their expenses to south side to make entry at temporary office?"(2)

On the same evening, the following wire was received from the Minister of Public Works: "Removal only temporary,permanent office shall be built on north side." (3)

The police guard,however, did not relax their vigilance and remained at their post all day Tuesday. As a heavy rain came on in the forenoon,the police to preserve the books from damage started to put them under shelter in the office. This being seen and its motive being misinterpreted , the alarm was given. "All the bells were rung and in eight minutes by the watch not less than one hundred and fifty men were around the land office with a hundred or two coming as fast as they could." (4) When it was seen that there was no trouble the crowd again dispersed.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, June 30th,1892
(2) Ibid.
(3) Ibid.
(4) Ibid.

Telegrams were received by the Mayor on June 21st from Lieutenant-Governor Royal and Senators Lougheed and Girard, all of whom had thoroughly gone into the matter with the authorities at Ottawa and had become conversant with their intentions. The content of all three wires was to the effect that assurance had been given by the government that the removal of the timber and land office to the south side was but a temporary measure to allow present immigrants on the south side to make entry; the office would then be reopened on the north side where permanent offices would be built on the site chosen. A telegram followed from Hon. E. Dewdney, Minister of the Interior, on Wednesday afternoon, June 22nd, deploring the mob violence at Edmonton which prevented land business from being transacted; stating the whole object of action had been for the public interest and convenience and that the agent was being sent further instructions which it was hoped would meet the public requirements.(1) A telegram from the Hon. Wilfrid Laurier, Leader of the Opposition, capped the climax and clinched the matter. It read as follows:

"Ottawa, June 22nd- Attention of government called by me yesterday to condition of things at Edmonton. Minister of Justice answered that land office would not be removed from Edmonton and that the only thing contemplated was to place an office on the south side for the convenience of immigrants."(2) These assurances were considered by the mayor and council as sufficiently definite that Edmonton was to retain the land office, the south side one being but a branch office. When Inspector Piercy informed Mayor McCauley at noon that he had received instructions

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, June 30th, 1892.
(2) Ibid.

to remove such of the books as were necessary for the carrying on of business at the south side office, the town authorities raised no objections. "At about one o'clock,Inspector Piercy drove to the land office accompanied by four policemen.Agent Anderson,assistant agent Royal and forest ranger Johnstone removed a portion of the books in the presence of the Mayor and about fifty citizens..... before the books were taken away agent Anderson announced that the Edmonton Land Office would be open as usual on Thursday morning, with a forest ranger, A.E.Johnstone,in charge and that all business would be transacted there as usual." (1)

The Edmonton Land Office was definitely reopened for business on Thursday, June 23rd. On that morning,Mayor McCauley accompanied two settlers,who wished to make an entry,to the Land Office and found Mr. Anderson in charge who attended to the business in hand and gave information in a very willing manner. At the same time the south side office was open and in charge of Mr. Jules Royal.

There were certain attendant difficulties and inconveniences resulting from the setting up of the sub-office on the south side. At first,the double office seemed to be run without any well-established and convenient system. In the moving,the books got mixed up,some of those for the north side being sent to the south side and vice versa. This caused considerable difficulty,delay and dissatisfaction in the transaction of business. Incoming settlers had to wait for their entries until the proper books could be transferred from one side to the other.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, June 30th,1892.

With the reopening of the land office and the establishment of a sub-office on the south side ,excitement subsided and life in the settlement assumed its normal trend. In Ottawa, the matter was again brought up in the House of Commons on July 2nd by the Hon. Wilfrid Laurier who asked if there was not some misunderstanding regarding the Edmonton land office. He drew attention to the fact that despite Mr. Dewdney's statement in the House that the land office was not to be moved,the local agent had published a notice to the effect that such was the case and had proceeded to carry the moving into effect. To which question the Minister of the Interior replied- "He (the agent) had no authority whatever to do that. The intention was to remove temporarily to the south side and not to close the office on the north side. I was surprised to hear that this notice had been issued and the interpretation that the agent has put upon his instructions is wrong."(1) On the leader of the Opposition definitely putting the question if there was any intention of making a permanent change in the location of the office, the Minister of the Interior replied emphatically in the negative.

Almost simultaneously with the giving of the foregoing reply to the Hon. Mr. Laurier by the Hon. Mr. Dewdney in the House of Commons,Mayor McCauley received the following letter of censure from the Minister of the Interior:

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, July 18th,1892,- extract from the Hansard report of July 2nd,1892.

Ottawa,June 27th,1892.

"Now that the difficulties arising at Edmonton have apparently come to a termination,I think it right to call your attention to the very grave responsibility which you as the official head of the town council assumed in the action which you took in forcibly preventing the officers of this department from carrying out their instructions to furnish temporary facilities at the end of track for people taking up homesteads along the line of the Calgary and Edmonton railway south of the river and thus saving them from the unnecessary trouble and expense involved in making their entries at the land office in Edmonton. Apart from any other consequences of your action,it is scarcely necessary to point out to you how injuriously immigration into the Edmonton district and settlement on the vacant lands therein are likely to be affected by the spectacle of the duly constituted authority of the town preventing by force and in defiance of all the well-known rules of law and order the execution of a direction issued to an official of his department by the minister of the Crown. If persons of your standing in the community,instead of using all your power and influence for the preservation of the peace,openly organize for the purpose of carrying out by force an illegal and improper object, it is quite easy to understand that strangers will scarcely dare to take the risk which would appear to be involved in settling in your community. I sincerely regret that I should find it my duty to write you in this way but the idea which I entertain of my own

responsibility appears to me to render it necessary to do so." (1)

The sentiments expressed in this communication on the face of it seemed at variance with the Minister's telegram to Mayor McCauley and his statement in the House of Commons. The Minister had said in his first telegram to the Mayor that "Agent Anderson had nothing to do with the removal which was decided upon solely for the public convenience and the public interests."(1) Later, in the House he had replied to Laurier that the local agent had no authority and had acted contrary to instructions, and still later, in his letter of censure to Mayor McCauley, he had scored the Mayor for having prevented "by force and in defiance of all the well-known rules of law and order the execution of a direction issued to an officer of his department by a minister of the crown." Although the trouble was over, in that the land office was again functioning in its accustomed place, the occurrence in all its aspects continued to be much discussed in the settlement. The tone of the letter received by Mayor McCauley still further confirmed the view generally prevalent that there were very apparent discrepancies between the actions of subordinate officials and the statements given by members of the government in the House. The Bulletin came out strongly in an editorial denouncing the whole business and claiming that it was a scheme to further private interests in which government officials were involved.(2)

The permanent location of the Edmonton timber and land office was definitely settled when the government finally accepted and

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, June 30th, 1892.
(2) Ibid.

registered in the Edmonton land office,lots forty-nine and fifty, block five, fronting on Victoria Avenue, which had been offered as a site for the proposed government offices. Tenders for the erection of the Land and Registration office at Edmonton were called for by the Department of Public Works, dated Ottawa, June 27th, 1892, and advertised in the Calgary Herald of July 11th, 1892, and construction was shortly afterwards begun.

CHAPTER XIV

The Trail of '98

After the California gold rush of 1848 had reached its height and production had begun to wane, miners,dissatisfied with the steadily dwindling results, moved north to the Cariboo country where rich discoveries had been made and then to the gold fields of the Cassiar mountains. When both these diggings in turn showed unmistakable signs of exhaustion, the restless prospectors spread through the mountains of British Columbia to the Yukon or along the Alaska coast. The Yukon area, mined for many years, had been remarkable rather for the vast area over which gold was distributed and for its equal distribution therein than for any great quantity in any particular place.

About the middle of August,1896, a rich strike of gold was made on Bonanza Creek, a small stream emptying into the Klondike River about two miles above its mouth. The Klondike is a tributary of the Yukon and flows into that river just above Forty Mile City,which is the headquarters of the recorder of mining claims. When authentic news of the find finally came in December, 1896,there was a veritable stampede of miners from there and other parts

of the Klondike to Bonanza and neighboring creeks-the Eldorado, Dominion,Hunker,Indian and others and the area was all staked within a short space of time. These neighboring streams likewise proved rich and it was the consensus of opinion among the miners that the gold strike in this region was rich beyond all expectation. Reports of the dazzling richness of the claims reached the outside in January of 1897 through the medium of the first mail that went out by dog-team, bearing letters to relatives and friends of the miners. The news reached the Pacific coast settlements first and by spring and early summer there was a regular stampede from there to the Klondike. Vessels of every conceivable kind- freighters,coal-vessels,fishing boats and anything that could float- were being chartered in coast ports to transport gold-seekers to the Klondike before the world at large had heard anything about that promising gold field.

The first tangible results of the winter's strike became evident to the outside world with the arrival of two steamers,one at San Francisco and the other at Seattle. The Alaska Commercial Company's steamer, Excelsior, reached the former place on June 16th, 1897,having on board a party of returned miners who had wintered on the Yukon and who were coming out with $750,000 in gold-dust. The next day the steamer,Portland, of the North America Transportation and Trading Company arrived at Seattle with some sixty miners bringing out some $800,000 in gold. These successful gold-seekers confirmed the report that the new find surpassed any previous gold

field on record. Immediately,word went east over the wires of these marvellous results from the winter's diggings, of the millions awaiting shipment and of the prospects still untouched.

Newspapers both in America and the Old World published news of these rich finds and discussed the possibilities of the Klondike gold fields. Many of these dispatches were reproduced in the columns of the Edmonton Bulletin,helping to rouse the gold fever in that little frontier settlement . One from San Francisco of June 25th,1897, told of the arrival of the steamer Alice at St. Michaels on June 25th, 1897, bringing "twenty-five miners and half a million in gold for them and much on its own account..... In all about seventy-five lucky miners have reached St. Michaels. Some brought out a portion of their clean-up preferring to invest the rest in mines they knew to be rich. Among the lucky are: J. J. Clements, Los Angeles, who has cleaned up about $175,000. He brought out about $65,000 and has $15,000 in sight and claims his mine is worth $500,000 more. William Stanley of Seattle cleaned up $112,000, William Sloane of Nanaimo $85,000. There are some thirty or more who will not talk but stand guard over the treasure in their staterooms..... all this gold and more to come is the clean-up of last winter's work. It must all come out via St. Michaels."

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, July 26th,1897.

Extracts from another letter sent from the Klondike region by a prominent and wealthy young business man of San Francisco to his brother in Edmonton were quoted in the same issue: "The excitement on the river is indescribable and the output of the new Klondike district almost beyond belief. Men who had nothing last fall are now worth a fortune. One man has worked forty square feet of his claim and is going out with $40,000 in dust. One quarter of claims are now selling at $15,000 to $50,000. The estimate of the district given is three miles with an average value of $300,000. At Dawson,sacks of dust are thrown under counters in the stores for safe-keeping. Some of the stories are so fabulous that I am afraid to report them for fear of being suspected of the infection. If reports are true,it is the biggest placer discovery made in the world for though other diggings have been found quite as rich in spots,no such extent of discovery has been known which prospected and worked as high right through."(1)

It seemed that each report was more astounding than the previous one. A Port Townsend,Washington, despatch of July 17th read--"This morning a steamship from St. Michaels for Seattle passed up the Sound with more than a ton of solid gold on board and eighty-eight passengers. In the captain's cabin are three chests and a large safe filled with the precious nuggets. The metal is worth nearly $300,000 and most of it was taken out of the ground in less than three months of last winter: the size of the nuggests ranges from

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, July 26th, 1897.

the size of a pea to a guinea egg. Of the eighty-eight miners aboard hardly a man has less than $70,000 and one or more have more than $100,000 in nuggets." (1)

The reports of the fabulous finds of gold and such dazzling stories of fortunes gained in a year in the placer diggings of the Yukon,which found their way through the press and by various other means to all quarters of the globe, had its inevitable results. The Klondike became the chief topic of conversation in the Old Country, as well as on this continent, and information regarding it and the route to be traversed in getting there was eagerly sought. Hundreds made preparations to leave for the far off gold fields, giving up good positions,mortgaging their property in many cases or being staked by friends who were unable to go in person. Men of all grades of life, some with experience and many without, flocked to the newly discovered placer gold diggings on the Klondike creeks.

One of the attractive features of the new field was that the Alaska gold was of such a nature that it could be panned out without the aid of the expensive and elaborate machinery,necessary with rock embedded metals, making it possible for one man practically without assistance to carry the necessary equipment with him or to make it and to secure by his own efforts the coveted gold. Hence this placer mining was frequently spoken of as poor man's mining.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, July 26th,1897.

The way taken by the prospectors into the Klondike area was by the Pacific coast. Steamers ran direct from Seattle to Dyea Inlet by way of Juneau,Alaska. From the head of Dyea Inlet the route followed the Dyea River and then overland through the Chilkat or Chilkoot Pass, a distance of thirty-three miles, through the Coast range of mountains. From there, a portage of nine miles led to Lake Lindeman, the headwaters of one of the main tributaries of the Yukon. Here, the miners built boats to go down stream to the gold fields. The elevation of the summit of the Dyea Pass was about 4,000 feet above the sea, a very steep climb. Because of the steepness of the Pass all goods had to be packed from the sea to the summit. At first, the only method of getting the goods in was on men's backs up the Pass, a toilsome and wearing task, but, later, horses were used. When the ground was covered with snow, the nine mile portage from the summit to the head of Lake Lindeman could be traversed by horses and sleighs.

There were two American trading companies, the Alaska Commercial Company and the American Transportation Company, which had for some years been taking supplies into the Yukon and, when the great strike materialized, they immediately increased their freighting capacity and their trading facilities. They as a rule did not carry freight for others than their owners. Their cargoes went into the country by a different route from that taken by travellers and miners. Ocean-going vessels carried their supplies to the mouth of the Yukon on Behring Sea. From there, they were transferred to

river steamers which took them some two thousand miles up river to Forty-Mile City and other points within Canadian territory. The steamers of these companies made from two to four trips in the season. Navigation on the Yukon River opened about the 25th of May and closed about the 20th of October, but Behring Sea opened only about July 1st and closed October 1st. It was this late opening of Behring Sea that made the transportation problem difficult as the river navigation was superb.

So great was the rush of gold-seekers to the Klondike in '97 that the facilities of the coast route soon became congested. Coal barges, fishing boats, and every available craft that was at all sea-worthy were pressed into service to reach Dyea Inlet. The ports along the coast were filled to overflowing with gold-seekers, waiting to go Klondikewards. The influx was so great that it resulted in an utter breakdown of the means of transportation. The long wait, which the limited water facilities imposed on the impatient travellers, raised the question of another way in. There was also another aspect of the situation. The established steamship service was wholly under American control. All the supplies taken into the country were from points in the United States and the huge sums realized from the transportation of passengers and supplies went into American pockets. Though the newly discovered gold-diggings in the Klondike area were on Canadian soil, none of the commercial advantages were accruing to Canada. In view of the probable great development of this gold field the question of an all-Canadian route from which Canada would benefit arose. That this route must start in the Canadian

North-West,be open all the year round and be safe and expeditious was apparent. The advantages of such an undertaking were soon taken up and featured in most Canadian newspapers and considered by Canadian authorities.

There were two routes advocated via Edmonton to the Yukon - the Mackenzie River route and the Overland route. The former, which acquired the appellation of the "poor man's route", offered an almost continuous all-water way to the Klondike and had the great advantage of being nearly all down-stream navigation. Starting at Athabaska Landing,this route led down the Athabaska River to Lake Athabaska, down the Slave River and across Great Slave Lake to the Mackenzie which was descended almost to its mouth - to the point where the Rat River flowed into it- thence up the Rat River and over an almost all-water connection (with the exception of a portage of thirty-five miles) into the Porcupine River, the descent of which brought one to the Yukon. This route to the North had been used for years by the Hudson's Bay Company in transporting supplies in to their posts and furs out of that region. The proposed Overland route had likewise been explored and used for trade by the Hudson's Bay Company years before. The direction of this route was by way of old Fort Assiniboine,down the Athabaska River, across to Lesser Slave Lake,then by portage to Peace River which was followed to its source. From the headwaters of the Peace the way led overland to the Liard and thence by another portage to the head of the Pelly River by which was reached Fort Selkirk

in the Yukon region. Each of the routes had its advocates and various opinions were expressed by persons who knew the north country. It was pretty much on the information available and the advice offered that incoming parties made their decisions to take one or the other.

The views of Mr. J. E. Camsell of Fort Simpson, Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company for the Mackenzie River District, concerning the Mackenzie River and Overland routes were given publicity through the Edmonton press. This official had spent forty-five years in the north, the greater part at Fort Simpson. "As a highway to the gold fields", said Mr. Camsell, "the Mackenzie River route is one over which large quantities of supplies could be transported with least labour and expense. I am not in favour of attempting to track up the Liard and portage the rapids at Hell Gate at any time except in winter over the ice. Though the Indians made the portage, it was by using canoes made of green hides which would not be injured by contact with the boulders and would slide over the shallow places. The heavy boats which some of the prospectors used would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to handle up the rapids and over the portages. The route down the Mackenzie to Peel River and thence across to the Porcupine or up the Peel to the head of navigation and across to the Stewart or Macmillan is much preferable to the route up the Liard as a means of access to the gold fields. I am a firm believer in the richness of the mineral region and confident that good strikes will be made on many of the rivers tributary to the Yukon."(1)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, March 31st, 1898.

The opinion and experience of another old-time northerner and former Hudson's Bay Company man, who happened to be in Edmonton at the time, also found its way into the columns of the press for the benefit of outgoing prospectors. The person in question, W. J. McLean, was from 1863 to 1873 in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company's post at Fort Liard and was familiar with the ways of the North and the country to be travelled to the gold fields of the Yukon. His information regarding that region and the navigation of the waters there was to the effect--"That tracking up the Liard River from Fort Simpson to Fort Liard was never considered difficult by the Hudson's Bay Company's men, if taken at the right time of year, that is when the water is not too high. The periods of high water are when the ice comes down in the mountains. The first difficulty to be met with in tracking up the river is the rapids which extend for thirty or forty miles below the Devil's Portage. These rapids commence about one hundred miles above Fort Liard and are certainly difficult to track up during the period of high water. In the early days ,the Company's men used to shoot them in their loaded boats going down with the ice when it broke up. The best time to track up the rapids is from the first of September to the close of navigation ,which is generally about the middle of October. The Devil's Portage is not difficult and after it is passed there are a number of portages but none are of any great length and are easy to cross. With regard to the water route via the Athabaska and Mackenzie rivers it is undoubtedly the'poor man's'

route. If the boat is of the right kind the miner can take it right through to the upper waters of the Peel by this route."(1)

The Overland route was strongly championed by the Edmonton Bulletin. It pointed out that the Hudson's Bay Company had years before established a trade route to this same region of the Yukon from Edmonton, up the Liard and down the Pelly. "A wagon road to Peace River and the Liard and across mountains following up the Liard River to the navigable waters of the Pelly would be a means whereby Canada would be able to reap the advantage of the development of the Yukon which otherwise must go to the United States" was the burthen of its text.(2)

As Edmonton would be the main outfitting centre for parties going to the Klondike region, it would have much to gain by the opening of an overland road for purposes of going into the northern gold fields. Its citizens were keenly alive to these possibilities. Mr. J. A. McDougall,who was then mayor,issued a call for a public meeting to be held in Robertson Hall on Saturday,August 7th, 1897, for the purpose of discussing the opening up of a direct Canadian route to the Yukon. The Board of Trade likewise held a special meeting in the Council Chamber on Tuesday,August 10th, to request the Dominion Government to open up a trail to the Yukon gold fields. The interest in such

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, February 17th,1898.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, May 6th,1897.

a route was shared by the surrounding district. The residents of Fort Saskatchewan and thereabout held a mass meeting on the evening of July 29th,1897, at which the following resolution was unanimously adopted and ordered to be transmitted to the Honourable Clifford Sifton,Minister of the Interior: "That in our opinion and in the interests of the whole Dominion the federal authorities of the Dominion should immediately construct a wagon road and telegraph line from this point to the Upper Yukon via the ruins of Fort Assiniboine, Lesser Slave Lake, Peace River and Liard River valleys and take in the whole mineral belt of the west and north at a nominal cost. The total distance from here to the Klondike in a straight line is only eleven hundred miles, while the nearest route now used is about thirty-four hundred miles. It is supposed that between six and seven hundred miles of wagon road could be completed between now and December 1st next." (1) The argument advanced by those putting forth the project was that the miner going to Dawson could reach it more easily from the point where the Overland route strikes the Pelly River, roughly a thousand miles from Edmonton, than if he travelled by the Coast route via Lake Lindeman or Teslin Lake.

As a result of these importunings the Federal Government was stirred to action and decided to look into the feasibility of such a route through the medium of the North-West Mounted Police. The

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, August 2nd, 1892.

Commissioner of that force sent a police patrol overland from Edmonton to the Yukon in September, 1897, in order to explore the country and obtain information on the best route to be followed to the Klondike region. This patrol was in charge of Inspector J. D. Moodie, whose instructions regarding the mission he was to undertake were set forth in the following letters from the Police Commissioner:

Office of the Commmissioner,
North-West Mounted Police,
Regina,27th August,1897.

To Inspector J.D.Moodie,
North-West Mounted Police.

"You have been selected to command a small party about to leave Edmonton for the head waters of the Pelly River, the object being to collect exhaustive information on the best road to take for parties going into the Yukon via that route and with this object in view you must map out the route and carefully mark the portions over which a wagon trail can be made without expense and the portions that require corduroying,grading or ditching; stating whether the work would be great or small. The portions of the road that cannot be made practicable for wagons,except at enormous expense,must be reported on as practicable, or otherwise, for pack trains, driving cattle over, etc. and you must report on all creeks and rivers that require bridges or ferries,their width, approaches, etc., and all along the route you must note

the supply of fuel,feed and hay.

The main object is to get parties with wagons as far as possible and then when not practicable with wagons, with pack horses and cattle, to the navigable waters of the Pelly River, avoiding the dangerous navigation of the Liard River,if possible. You will also report on favourable sites on the route for depots of provisions to be placed,either by public or private enterprise. In fact you will be expected on return to supply such reliable information that a party leaving Edmonton will know exactly what they must expect at all points en route. You must be careful in preparing your report to stick to actual facts and not be influenced by anyone. No avoidable delay must occur in obtaining this information."(1)

Sgd. L.W.Herchmer,Commissioner.

North-West Mounted Police,
Edmonton,2nd September,1897.

To Inspector J.D.Moodie,
North-West Mounted Police:

"On leaving St. John,in my opinion,based on the information I have been able to collect,the best route for you to travel with a view to reaching the Yukon is to follow up the Peace River to the

(1) Instructions to and diary of Inspector J. D. Moodie contained in the Annual Report of L.W.Herchmer,Commissioner, North-West Mounted Police, 1898, to the Federal Government, Sessional Papers 14-15,vol.33,No.12,1899.

vicinity of the mouth of the Halfway River and then to follow along that river to its upper waters where it comes out of the mountains. Immediately across are several lakes, one called Pyke and another Tacherdy Lake . If possible, you should get across to these lakes from whence there is said to be a pack trail to Fort Sylvester on Dease River and then down Dease river to its confluence with the Liard and then up that river or its branch to Frances Lake. You may find it possible to strike the junction of the Liard and Dease Rivers where there used to be a winter post, and may still be, without going to Sylvester's which will greatly shorten the distance. Your point is the Pelly Banks and the shortest route you can make the better, always bearing in mind that the route must be by land and practicable, where possible, for wagons and always for pack horses.

"Your party consists of four men and any Indian or Indians you may from time to time find it expedient to engage who have local knowledge. The surveyor with you must make himself generally useful and must take full notes for you of everything en route. You must read his notes daily and see that he has everything down, particularly noting places suitable for settlement, hay available and land suited for farming. I think it would be advisable for you to keep full particulars yourself and if you find that you differ from the surveyor, it will be advisable to talk the matter over with your men and settle the point on the spot. You have one hundred pounds of pemmican with you: this must be kept until the last resource

and may be the means of taking your party into the Klondike.

"It is impossible to give you detailed instructions but with good men,plenty of provisions and fair luck you should be able to get to the Klondike during the winter. Remember that you have a reserve of provisions at St. John on which you can give orders and take every chance of sending back letters reporting your progress. The Hudson's Bay Company at St. John or other posts will forward them and you have a letter from their Commissioner to all Hudson's Bay officials . It may be necessary at Sylvester's or elsewhere to get dogs for the rest of your trip owing to snow. You have full authority but remember that the object is to find a horse and cattle track where a wagon road is impossible."(1)

sgd. L.W.Herchmer,

Commissioner.

Inspector Moodie left Edmonton on September 4th,1897, his party consisting of Constable F.J. Fitzgerald, Richard Hardisty, son of the late Senator Hardisty, Frank Lafferty and H.S.Tobin,graduates of the Royal Military College, Baptiste Pepin, a half-breed, and an Indian guide. Their equipment comprised twenty-four pack and six saddle horses. Owing to the late start,winter over-took the police party shortly after leaving Fort St. John and on arriving at Fort

(1) Instructions to Inspector J.D.Moodie contained in the Annual Report of L.W.Herchmer,Commissioner, North-West Mounted Police, 1898, to the Federal Government,Sessional Papers 14-15,vol. 33, No. 12,1899.

Graham in January all idea of going farther until spring had to be given up. From Fort St. John, Inspector Moodie, according to his instructions, sent back by the Hudson's Bay Company's boat a report to the Police Commissioner, containing all available data regarding their trip to date. Details concerning the country travelled as far as Fort St. John were therefore available for prospectors going in. Because of the delay occasioned by having to spend the winter at Fort Graham on the Finlay River the police patrol did not reach Fort Selkirk until October 25th, 1898, and it was towards the end of November, 1898, that Inspector Moodie returned to the Territories and reported to his superior officer. The greater part of the information contained in his report and diary submitted to Commissioner Herchmer was not available to the public until about the close of the year 1898.

In the meantime, the efforts of the Edmonton settlement with regard to opening up the overland route were not relaxed. In February 1898 the Edmonton town council, on petition from the citizens and prospectors, asked the Federal Government through the medium of the Minister of the Interior, for a grant of $1,000 for the cutting of a road for a pack trail from Peace River Landing to the Pelly River. The prospectors preparing to go into the Klondike agreed to assist in cutting the roadway if guides were provided. The reply of the Government being in the affirmative, the town council, in order to save time until they were in receipt of the money, took steps to consider the details of the overland route to be travelled and to

get the trail-making activities under way. W. P. Taylor of Lac Ste. Anne was engaged at a remuneration of $950 to locate the pack trail from Peace River Crossing to the Pelly River. "He is to start at once," announced the Bulletin of February 24th, "and his route will be either from the Peace River Crossing or Dunvegan whichever seems advisable to him and thence in as direct a line as possible to the Pelly River and return. He is also to blaze a trail for the benefit of the parties who will follow him and keep a diary on the condition of the country travelled. There are now large numbers of prospecting parties at Peace River Crossing and other points along the trail and a number of these will follow the trail blazed by Mr. Taylor, and they agree in consideration of having a guide furnished them to cut a pack trail through the country travelled."(1)

Edmonton's citizens individually added their efforts to get a wagon or pack trail opened up to the navigable waters of the Pelly River. Mr. Frank Oliver, editor of the Bulletin, gave a lecture to the Winnipeg Board of Trade early in 1898, which is quoted in full as it presents so much information regarding the advantages of this route.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, February 24th, 1898.

Mr. Oliver said "he hoped to show the commercial advantages of linking together by the best possible means of communication the grain fields and cattle ranges of the Red River and the Saskatchewan and the gold fields of the Yukon. The route of which he was to speak was not the Edmonton route, Edmonton was but a point on this route: it was the Canadian route, the line of travel whereby the business of the Yukon would be done by the rest of Canada; it was the only all-Canadian route. The question was asked-- has anybody travelled over it? The first trade ever done in the Yukon by white men was by men who went by one or other of the two Edmonton routes and who carried on business for many years. Even yet, the business was done in the Yukon by the Mackenzie route. The same advantages that existed forty or fifty years ago exist today. The first men who mined gold there, Messrs. Harper and McQuestion, went in twenty years ago by the Mackenzie River route. It was not his intention to compare the different routes but to state the existence and practicability of the two via Edmonton. First, there was the water route. Yukon was not a point but a vast territory, five hundred miles in length, almost entirely gold bearing. The route would depend on the part to be reached: if it were the lower from Dawson City downward the Mackenzie River offered the advantages of down stream navigation. Starting at Athabaska Landing stream navigation was continuous with the exception of a portage of thirty-five miles from the Mackenzie to the Porcupine River. There was no other route by which a man by his own exertions

could take in such a large quantity of supplies. It was the route that had been used by the Hudson's Bay Company for the last forty years. Going to the lower Yukon was largely a matter of taking supplies;distance was not so much account as carrying capacity. If a man was not able to go to the Yukon with a year's supplies, he had better not go. The route by which the largest amount of supplies can be taken at the smallest expense is the most advantageous route. Dawson City is only the starting point in the Yukon for the prospector or miner. Today, the camp at Dawson City is overrun by men seeking claims. But the claims in that locality are all staked. Men are now practically going to Dawson City for information as to what point they had better strike out for. Those who take the Mackenzie route pass through a gold-bearing country all the way from the Peace River, five or eight hundred miles. It was chiefly men from the United States who had taken this route in view of the great natural difficulties in getting over the passes and the very probable congestion of traffic. He was not decrying the Coast routes, but he wanted to point out that the interests of the whole Dominion of Canada east of the Rocky Mountains were bound up in the development of these interior routes. The thousands of people who are outfitting to go to Dawson City, some at Edmonton,some at Vancouver,some at Seattle,are spending large sums of money. It was a well-known fact that nine-tenths of the expenditure made by the men who are going to get Canadian gold and to work in Canadian territory do not in any way accrue to the people of Canada. The larger proportion of people are outfitting at Seattle or Tacoma. Every pound of bacon and flour brought by those

starting from Edmonton is a product of this country. If the Yukon country is to be developed, this country should share in its prosperity. It is said that distance is against us, yet the route by the mouth of the Yukon is two thousand miles up stream, while that by the Mackenzie is down stream. A knowledge of the Mackenzie route does not exist throughout the greater part of Canada - a campaign of education would be a very desirable thing. By this route the steamboat navigation can be linked together by the construction of not more than one hundred and ten miles of railway, sixty at Grand Rapids, sixteen at the portage between the Mackenzie and Porcupine Rivers. Not only would this give access to the Yukon by stream but it would open up a line of communication of fifteen hundred miles through a country the development of which would add greatly to the wealth of the Dominion and would benefit the business and agricultural interests of this country.

"The overland route," Mr. Oliver went on to say, "is not in the same position as the water route but it is certainly practicable and one that would be of advantage at the present time to the people of this country. Mining is hard work. Miners want strong food and beef is the best they can get. By opening a cattle trail we could have the supplying of the population of the Yukon with beef which would be half the expense of living of the miner. There is a greater expenditure in getting out gold than the gold is worth. The cost is chiefly that of food supply. The man who sells the miner his supplies has more money than the miner in the long run. We have the only route by which cattle can be driven into the gold fields. With the opening of that route we are at once sure

of a fair share of the prosperity that will result from the opening up of mining in the Yukon. Give us the necessary expenditure that fat cattle can be driven on foot to Pelly River and we will share in the advantages of that trade. Cattle can now be driven in but it is one thing to do it profitably and satisfactorily. I do not claim it is now possible to do it with good advantage- improvements are needed- a comparatively small sum would open up the Pelly River for cattle. If it is practicable for cattle, it is also so for men and horses . Horses will then be purchased and also the men's outfits in Canada. Give us the cattle trail and we will share very largely in the general outfitting and supply trade. We ask that it be opened now. This is the year of the rush and it is hardly possible that there can be another year of as great a rush. From the rush that has already started, Edmonton has profited to a considerable degree but the proportion going this way is small compared to that going by the Coast. If the work were commenced at once on a road from Edmonton to Pelly River, if people were assured of good facilities of getting through to Pelly River, this summer, there would be an immediate benefit to the people of Canada. The people of the North-West are interested on account of pack-ponies : horses have doubled and trebled in price. By inducing people to go this way horses will be advanced in price. The opening of this route now would attract through our vacant lands a most desirable class of people who might turn their steps backward to establish their homes as agriculturists. There are people of a desirable class who have money of their own to spend who are not only willing but anxious to

go through our country and see its advantages. Canada is known now as it never was before.....A wagon road from the Peace River to the Nelson River and a pack trail thence to the Pelly River will give direct communication from Edmonton to the head waters of the Yukon system."(1)

As Edmonton's federal representative, Mr. Frank Oliver, also spoke in the House of Commons in support of the inland route via Edmonton. He contended that if a railroad was built from Edmonton to the Pelly River it would open up the entire trade of the Yukon to eastern Canada, the greater part of which went to the United States via the coast line. A wagon road from Edmonton to the navigable waters of the Pelly River, the main branch of the Yukon River,was shorter than the route by the Pacific coast.(2)

A telegraphic despatch from Ottawa, dated May 5th,1898,gave the news that- "Before the Senate Special Committee Mr. Frank Oliver, M.P. gave evidence to prove that a pack trail could be constructed between the Liard and Pelly Rivers which he claimed was the beginning of the gold-bearing area. 'The head waters of the Liard and Pelly,' he said, 'was the objective point of parties going into the Yukon from Edmonton and as good gold prospects existed there as farther down the Pelly and Yukon in what is known as the Klondike. The distance from Edmonton to the divide between the Liard and Pelly Rivers was only seven hundred and forty miles so that a pack trail could be opened up

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, February 7th,1898.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, March 21st, 1898.

giving communication with the gold bearing district of the Yukon for $23,000'." (1)

The various appeals had the desired result and the supplementary estimates brought down to the House of Commons on May 31st,1898, provided for $15,000 for the wagon trail from Edmonton to the Yukon.(2)

During the summer of 1898,the Territorial government spent $10,000. on road construction, which showed that it had faith in the practicability of the proposed road. The route chosen was via St.Albert to the Athabaska River,across it to Fort Assiniboine,and thence over the Swan Hills towards Grouard(the road never reached beyond the last named point). In December of the same year,an order-in-council was passed by the Dominion Government handing over the federal appropriation to the government of the North-West Territories for the continuation of the work on the condition that it would spend dollar for dollar on road construction. (3)

Through the publicity gained by means of these efforts and by various advertising media the Edmonton routes had become better known and parties bound for the gold fields began to pour into town. During the week of February 10th-17th,1898, over four hundred loaded flat-sleds left the town for Peace River. The Calgary Herald of March 21st,1898, notes that when the train pulled out for Edmonton

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, March 9th,1898.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, June 6th,1898.

(3) Edmonton Bulletin,December 8th,1898.

three hundred prospectors were aboard, who had selected the Edmonton route as the cheapest, safest and most likely to produce good results.

An editorial in the Edmonton Bulletin of March 3rd, 1898, illustrates the influx of prospectors to Edmonton,- "The rush over the snow to the Yukon by the Edmonton route is at its height. Parties are arriving by twenties and thirties on every train and hurrying forward to take advantage of the last snow which is gradually but steadily disappearing. The main street is now in a state of semi-slush and the strings of loaded flat-sleighs travel along the side in preference to the centre where the travelling is heavier. In the open, the snow is soft and commencing to settle. So numerous are the pilgrims that are pouring in that it is practically impossible to keep track of the different parties. Some immediately upon arrival go to hotels, some remain for a few days at the south side; all available rooms and shanties are occupied by 'batchers' and lodging accommodation is at a premium. The great majority leave the train and go immediately into camp. A walk through the bluffs in the vicinity of the Hudson's Bay Company and McDougall and Secord's store reveals the fact that literally 'the woods are full of them'. Around the bluffs are clustered tents and tepees. In the open all is activity and life. Loaded flat-sleds are everywhere and the work of packing and collecting their outfits is being pushed by every party with all possible speed. Their stay in town is only long enough to allow them to complete their outfits before pulling out for the Landing which almost

all are endeavouring to reach before the road breaks up and the sleighing ceases. The open space offered by the race-track is utilized for breaking horses both to ride and drive and the scene it offers is not only lively but amusing -- to the spectator."(1)

The incoming gold seekers en route to the Klondike represented all classes and all walks and conditions of life. They came from the Old Country, eastern Canada and the United States, and a great many brought their outfits with them, convinced that Edmonton was the last outpost of civilization and nothing could be obtained here in the way of supplies. Many others, better informed, waited to outfit in Edmonton and obtained sound and reliable advice from old timers and Hudson's Bay Company men, who knew the north country, as to the proper outfit and the conditions to be met with. The Edmonton stores did a rushing business and such firms as Ross Brothers, who ran a big hardware store behind what is now the Alberta Hotel, and McDougall and Secord were kept busy supplying the incessant demand for outfits.

All available housing accommodation was soon exhausted. Incoming parties spread their tents and camped anywhere their fancy pleased, while waiting to outfit, to assemble their equipment or to start for the North. On front lawns of residences, back yards, vacant lots, in every available space was to be found the ubiquitous gold-seeker.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, March 3rd, 1898.

The equipment of some of the parties and the contrivances brought by some to transport themselves Klondikewards were to say the least novel in the extreme,even weird. All sorts and conditions of men, putting into effect the wildest ideas with regard to clothing and outfits seemed to concentrate on the spot.

"One spring morning,"said Bishop H. A. Gray,speaking about Edmonton in the gold rush days,"I was standing on the corner of Jasper Avenue opposite where the Queen's hotel now stands,talking to an old-timer, when there emerged from the door of the hotel an apparition which at first looked somewhat like a bear on its hind legs but on closer inspection proved to be some recent arrival who had donned his pet idea, a garment of fur which clothed him from head to foot, as Eskimos are sometimes represented but seldom seen, and in this garb on a warm April day, when spring or summer hats and clothes were making their first appearance,he set forth on his way to secure his mining licence. My old-timer friend merely remarked-'Lucky,if he is not shot for a bear'."

"The gold-seekers," said Bishop Gray, "were to be found camping in every quarter of the city. I remember counting twenty-four different parties camping at one time in vacant ground immediately west of the Hudson's Bay store and north of Jasper Avenue. In those days, the Land Office was on the corner of 100th avenue and 106th St. ,now the 19th Dragoon Armories. To it there was but one side-walk west of the Hudson's Bay store, which passed my house (103rd St.) and every morning after the arrival of the train there would be a continuous

stream of people going up to get mining licences.

"All hospital accommodation was filled to capacity and provision for judicial care was taxed to its utmost."

Of the various parties whose novel ideas in the way of outfits and contrivances to transport themselves and their supplies to the gold-diggings, the Helpman party,perhaps, provided the good people of Edmonton with most food for wonderment, conversation and amusement. This party,which later became known to the community as the "Helpless Party", was composed of retired army officers,professional men,titled English gentlemen and others. They brought their complete outfit from England, even to baled hay for their horses, being quite convinced they could get nothing in this country. They paid from $3,000 to $4,000 duty on the goods they brought in. There were snow-shoes for men and horses, mocassins from London, fur garments,patent warming apparatus in which a prepared fuel smoldered. "Very useful in case of sciatica and rheumatism", remarked the Bishop with a chuckle, when speaking of this party. That they might dine in the style to which they were accustomed their provisions included champagne and all kinds of the finest wines and liqueurs,preserved English game, Westphalian hams, the best cuts of meat preserved by an army process,eggs reduced to powder, and all the delicacies of the English market.

The story is told that when the members of this party detrained at the Strathcona station, one was heard to remark- "At last, bah Jove, thank heaven the worst of the journey is over! "

"One of the members of the 'Helpless party' was an Irish

nobleman,Lord Avonmore," continued the Bishop, "of whom much was heard afterwards. He appeared to have been a rolling stone whose intemperate habits won for him the unique name of 'Lord Have-One-More'. The leading members of this party spent Christmas with us," said the Bishop.

The Helpman party went into camp on the Hudson's Bay flats and proceeded to unpack their stuff and arrange their loads. A great deal of what they had brought with them was found to be useless and unsuitable for a prospector's outfit. The portion discarded was purchased by the Hudson's Bay Company and subsequently sold to the public.(1)

What success some of these out-going parties met with and how far they got on their journey,after they had left Edmonton,was often afterwards learned from returning prospectors or from members of the parties themselves, who returned for provisions,or, finding the trail too strenuous, gave up and drifted back. The Helpman party were met about twelve miles beyond the Athabaska by a returning prospector and later word came that they had arrived at Slave Lake post,having met with hard luck. The party then divided. By September, several,including 'Lord Have-One-More', were again in Edmonton en route to the Old Land, quite content to relinquish their quest.(2)

One party succeeded another and their unique outfits and ideas sustained the interest and stimulated the humour of the Edmonton community.

(1) Edmonton Bulletin,January 6th,1898.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin,March 31st,1898.

There was the man from Texas who with his partner was preparing to go by the Overland route via the Peace in the spring of 1898. His new and novel way of transporting a Klondike grub-stake was by means of three large water-tight whisky barrels packed with a thousand pounds of outfit. An axle was run through the centre of each barrel from end to end and the barrels then placed one after another with a few inches of space between and the axles of each fastened to a wooden frame. The idea was that they would roll along as an ordinary roller would. A frame work was built over the barrels which was intended to be used as a seat or bed and on which the outfit other than that packed in the barrels was carried. The whole contrivance was hauled by a team of ponies. The story was current among old timers that before much distance had been covered the barrels burst from the wear and tear of bumping over the exceedingly rough road and spilled their contents of provisions,etcetera,along the highway.

Then there was a Toronto party of nine,Yukon bound,who arrived in Edmonton in February of 1898. This party went into camp in a tent near the Massey Harris building. Their leader,Mr. J.T.Montgomery, was the inventor and patentee of a combined canoe and sleigh. "The bottom half of the contrivance can be used as a flat sleigh or canoe and has a cover of its own size but of lighter material. When open water is reached, the cover which is hinged to the side of the lower half can be turned back making a twin canoe. A number of canoes or sleighs are on exhibition near McCauley's stable."(1) This party pulled out of Edmonton on their long trek

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, February 7th,1898.

all going as merrily as the proverbial wedding bells. By the end of May of the same year word drifted back to town that the party had reached Peace River Crossing but that the contrivance having worn out on the way the members were forced to pack their outfits for some distance. Many would-be Klondikers drifted back to Edmonton during the summer of 1898 and among those noted as having "come out" on their way back home was the inventor of the combined canoe and sleigh.

The steam-sleigh contrivance brought by a group from Chicago held the interest of Edmonton for several weeks. It was intended to transport the party and their supplies to the Yukon, making use of the frozen waterways whenever possible. This party arrived soon after Christmas,1897, and camped behind Bishop Gray's house. They built three cabooses in one of which they installed the engine which was shipped from Chicago. They rented Duplessis' blacksmith's shop, where they were busily engaged for a time in making special runners for the cabooses.

The Edmonton Bulletin of January 17th,1898, gives the following description of the steam-sleigh-- "The motive power of the sleigh will be furnished by an engine which revolves a heavy iron drum attached to the under part of the front bob. The drum alone weighs three hundred and seventy three pounds and is provided with spikes to catch on the ice and snow. They state that on level ground and a good road the machine will travel fifteen miles an hour, so even if delayed on rough places on the rivers they calculate to make up for lost time on reaching level ice such as Great Slave Lake and the Mackenzie should offer....."

As the camp of this group was in such close proximity to Bishop Gray's house, he was a spectator of a good deal that went on. "This party," he said, "seemed conscious of the difficulties facing them; they were systematic and quite practical. They packed their things in barrels, each barrel containing a certain proportion of every article of their outfit, e.g. there was so much flour in each barrel and so much of each article of provisions. The pièce de resistance," remarked the Bishop ,"was in the mode of traction of which they were very proud, so much so that the date of departure was announced in Frank Oliver's Bulletin, and I watched the procedure from my window which overlooked their camping ground. The cabooses had been duly constructed on runners and loaded. The engine had been watered by our local water-man from his tank. The engineer with peak-cap trimmed with gold braid,and blue overalls and an oil can with a long spout hopped up and down,oiling here and there, reminding me of a canary picking up seeds in the bottom of his cage, while the head of the expedition,duly uniformed and his gold buttons straining with pride stood a little way off surveying the scene. There was much rushing about in and out, subordinates reporting and seeking instructions till at length all was ready. The engineer ,reporting, received the momentous order- 'let he go Jim',and Jim let her. He blew his whistle with a cheery,hopeful toot toot,turned on steam and left the rotating drum upon the ground. Eagerly and anxiously the group watched

for the first move of the caravan, but it remained inert, while the rotating drum proceeded to dig itself a comfortable grave. Never before in so short a time were the hopes and calculations of months so suddenly and completely shattered." So much for the picturesque account given by the old-timer Bishop. The fate of the expedition was briefly announced in the Bulletin of February 10th, 1898: "The Chicago company, who were constructing a steam-sleigh here to go overland on the snow and by frozen waterways to the Yukon made a trial of their machine a few days ago when it was found to be impracticable and would not work. The members of the party had been to great expense in buying their machinery and engine as well as building their four cars, but were fortunately able to dispose of the complete outfit to K. A. McLeod for a fair price. The party intend continuing their journey to the gold fields. Some will go by the Mackenzie route, when spring opens up, and the remainder will probably go overland by pack horses."

That many Edmontonians did get through to the Klondike was definitely established by letters written back to friends and relatives, though none of them met with any degree of success in the way of amassing a fortune. There were several women who also essayed the long and difficult journey there, these coming mainly from points in the United States.

The peak of the gold rush was reached by the end of 1898 and from then on to 1900,when the dwindling returns from the Klondike

diggings put an end to the gold fever, many of the disappointed and disillusioned prospectors straggled back through Edmonton. A few remained and settled in the community but the majority returned to their homes. From a business standpoint the little town of Edmonton had benefited greatly from the money spent in outfitting by the hundreds of incoming gold-seekers. The long period of stagnation which the settlement had endured, since the collapse of the land boom of 1882, was broken by the gold rush. It was a real period of prosperity which continued for some time after the last prospector had set forth on the trail of '98.

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